THE AGE OF SCANDAL

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An Excursion through a Minor Period

by

T. H. WHITE



JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE
LONDON

By the same author

MISTRESS MASHAM'S REPOSE

THE ELEPHANT AND THE KANGAROO

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'Clio is one of the most glorious of the Muses; but, as everyone knows, she (like her sister Melpomene) suffers from a sad defect: she is apt to be pompous. With her buskins, her robes, and her airs of importance she is at times, indeed, almost intolerable. But fortunately the Fates have provided a corrective. They have decreed that in her stately advances she should be accompanied by certain apish, impish creatures, who run round her tittering, pulling long noses, threatening to trip the good lady up, and even sometimes whisking to one side the corner of her drapery, and revealing her undergarments in a most indecorous manner. They are the diarists and letter-writers, the gossips and journalists of the past, the Pepyses and Horace Walpoles and Saint-Simons, whose function it is to reveal to us the littleness underlying great events and to remind us that history itself was once real life.'

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CHAPTER ONE

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WELL, we have lived to see the end of civilization in England. I was once a gentleman myself. When I was an undergraduate at Cambridge, the Master of a college was a fabulous being, who lived in a Lodge of breath-taking beauty and incalculable antiquity, tended by housemaids, footmen and a butler. There he consumed vintage port, wrote abstruse treatises if the spirit moved him, and lived the life of an impressive, cultivated gentleman. Such posts were among the few and noble rewards rightly offered to scholarship by the civilization which then existed.

When I last stayed in Cambridge, I lunched with two Masters of colleges. Both of them had to help with the washing-up after luncheon.

There was a comic story current shortly after the Hitler war — one tried to think that it was comic. It said that there was some conference or other at Lambeth, thronged with Archbishops, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Moderators and so forth. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York were seen to be in earnest consultation in one corner of the room. Were they discussing a reunion with Rome or a revision of the Prayer Book? Thrilled with the ecclesiastical possibilities of such a meeting, one of the stripling

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curates managed to edge himself within earshot of these Princes of the Church. They were discussing whether it was worse to wash-up or to dry-up.

The Earl of Shrewsbury — the 21st and premier earl of Great Britain — whose ancestors have served the crown, and thus the nation, in one way or another, for about 800 years, has become a 'barrow-boy'. He sells fruit in the open air at a stall by the roadside.

A deceased female labour Minister has given an interview to an American journalist, after driving the Earl Marshal of England out of his own home. The family pictures have been sold, she said with glee, and I can assure you that the Duke of Norfolk will never again be able to live in this house. 'We had our revolution during the war. We did not cut off their heads, we only cut off their incomes.' Yet the family of the Duke of Norfolk had served the crown on the battlefield, in the cabinet, and in the precursor of Miss Bondfield's 'Civil Service', for many and many generations.

They were generations of statesmen and proconsuls, who gave their sons in war more lavishly than any other class. Yet we have lived to see a labour Minister of War stating that he does not give a tinker's curse for people of that sort, and the Minister of Health describes them indiscriminately as 'vermin'.

It is useless to whine. It has happened. It is the logical result of our half-baked Victorian humanitarianism. All men are not equal. That ridiculous idea of English democracy was invented in the reign of Queen Victoria, and it has now become bureaucracy.

So, now that it is no longer possible to be a gentleman, now that there is no longer enough time or

money to be cultured, now that civilization has vanished along with the Word which gentlemen once kept. Now that glorious palaces like Knowle, Stowe, Wentworth Woodhouse, Bodiam, Montacute, Stourhead, Polesdon Lacey, Blenheim and the rest of them, are, or are likely to be, 'nationalized' for the wonderful proletariat, while the owners who gave their ancestors to make them lovely crouch in a couple of rooms in one wing, I have been looking back along the corridors of history, taking stock of that venture which once brought England to the leadership of the world. I believe that the peak of British culture was reached in the latter years of George III: that the rot began to set in with the 'Romantics': that the apparent prosperity of Victoria's reign was autumnal, not verna[l] and that now we are done for.

I have been consoling my old age by running aw[ay] rom the Bondfields and the Shinwells and the Beva[ns] by going back to the grand old days of Horace W[al]pole, and I have written this book in the effort to [...] one last, loving and living picture of an aristoc[ratic] civilization which we shall never see again.

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Before Mason, a biographer had been content to write about the subject in his own words. Mason invented the idea of letting the subject speak for himself. In his Life of Gray, he strung together a selection of the poet's letters – and sometimes even forged them – supplying the necessary links in a running commentary. Horace Walpole was delighted with it

> Were I to judge from my own feelings [he wrote] I should say there never was so entertaining or interesting a work: that it is the most perfect model of biography; and must make Tacitus, and Agricola too, detest you.

Later, when Dr. Johnson published a Life of the same poet, Horry was furious.

> Somebody asked Johnson if he was not afraid that *you* would resent the freedoms he has taken with Gray, . . . '*No, no, Sir; Mr. Mason does not like rough handling*' . . . The saucy Caliban!

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* * *

In this little scrap-book of a nostalgic Tory, I have tried to extend Mason's kind of biography to an Age, attempting rather to string together a series of quotations from the people themselves, than to speak 'in my own person' — 'by which', as Boswell added with self-sacrifice and some regret, 'I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work'.

In short, I have here tried to picture the nature and history of a minor period in its own words rather than in mine.

* * *

People are inclined to write as if the Age of Reas continued until the Romantic Revival, or as if Augustan period were an unbroken whole. But eighteenth century was split by a remarkable lin cleavage.

In the first half of the century, the authors bec rulers: in the second, the rulers became authors.

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If we look at the authors and the rulers before 1750, the difference is striking. On the one hand stand the omnipotent Popes and Swifts, courted or bribed or

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That was in the true Age of Reason, when Goldsmith could complain that he had been slighted by a mere lord. 'I met him', he said indignantly, 'at Lord Clare's in the country, and he took no more notice of me than if I had been an ordinary man.' 'A nobleman', agreed the Johnson of that period, 'ought to have made up to such a man as Goldsmith, and I think it is much against Lord Camden that he neglected him.' It was thought 'foolish' of Pope to giv his friendship to ordinary peers, although he alwa kindly assured them that he did not value them as suc

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I must tell you [wrote Lord Chesterfield to his son in 1750], that orthography, in the true sense of the word, is so absolutely necessary for a man of letters, or a gentleman, that one false spelling may fix a ridicule upon him for the rest of his life. And I know a man of quality who never recovered the ridicule of having spelled *wholesome* without the w.

The last fifty years of the century were directly the reverse of this. It was then the fourth Earl of Orford (Horace Walpole) who terrified the leaders of Grub Street and who drove young poets to suicide: it was the kings and the lords who were remembered, not the scribbling commons. George II, suffering from piles, lecturing the royal family, or standing with hi sword advanced like a fencing master, after his hors had run away with him at Dettingen: George II with his 'What, what?': the fat and rather touchi Florizel (George IV): the garrulous Clarence (Willia IV): these were real people seen in the round. was the upper classes who now held the stage with th articulacy, the Walpoles, Herveys, Selwyns, Hollar Boswells or even Brummells. Literature had passe the aristocracy, and the poets were disregarded pe like the clergyman Mason, or like Blake, who

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ıknown, or like the rusticated Cowper with his pet ares. Toward the end of the new period, Moore was oasting that Sir Walter Scott had called him 'a truly *entleman* poet', while the plebeian Wordsworth was too much of the poet'. Professional writers, by some strange fatality, had even begun to have ridiculous names, like Crabbe, Hogg, etc. By then the miserable bard was a lank, bony figure, with short black hair, who writhed and showed his teeth in a grin of earnestness while his verses were being criticized, exclaiming: 'Is that poetry, Sir? Is it Pindar?'

'Here is an error, Sir; you have made Genius feminine.' — 'Palpable, Sir,' cried the enthusiast; 'I knew it. But *(in a lower tone) it was to pay a compliment* to the Duchess of Devonshire, with which her Grace was pleased. She is walking across Coxheath, in the military uniform, and I suppose her to be the Genius of Britain!'

Hervey and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu — but it remains true, none the less, that the century began with power to the writers, and ended with power to the lords. It was literary power.

The atmosphere of the second epoch was different from the Age of Reason's: so different that the period seems to require a label of its own. One might suggest, the Age of Scandal.

Between the Classical and the Romantic movements, as they are recognized at present, there existed this other age, which was one of peculiar flavour. It filled the hiatus between Pope and Wordsworth with a distinct and unique culture, none the less real because it is seldom recognized now. It could be roughly dated between the death of Pope and the publication of the Lyrical Ballads, except that such dates are confusing. Periods do not exist between fixed years. They have forerunners in the previous age and laggards in th subsequent one. Although the Age of Scandal was a its height in the seventeen-eighties, under its greate product, Horace Walpole, yet, between forerunn and laggard, it may be said to have stretched fro Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to Croker or to Creev

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By 1780, Johnson himself, when flattered by Lord Newhaven, was bowing 'his head almost as low as the table, to a complimenting nobleman'.

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Few people seem to realize how charming and peculiar the Age of Scandal was. We have to dismiss

o much from our minds before we can crawl inside
heirs: before we can picture the powdered gentlemen
in silks and laces, with their jewellery and the swords
which they were ready to draw, with their sedan
chairs and lap dogs and immense bets and deep pota-
tions. One of the commonest words about male
clothes, in the letters of the reprobate Duke of Queens-
berry, was 'pretty'. One of his presents to the Prince
Regent was a muff. Among the commonest reactions
from readers and playgoers was that of tears. They
adored their dogs and sent them tender messages in
their letters. They were emotional about their friends,
catty about their enemies, unusual in their hobbies
and singular in themselves. They were perhaps the
first people in English literature to be real enough for
gossip.

Gossip must be about character. It is useless to
gossip about an unknown character, impossible to tel
a good story about a person without foibles; for it
the foible which gives the story point. These peop
had characters, were among the first people in Englar
who were sufficiently peculiar, in a modern way, to
apprehended by us as personalities. They did ext
ordinary things: puffed and blew like Dr. Johnson,
went to executions like the sinister Selwyn, or c
structed the astonishing tower of Fonthill like Be
ford, or said that they were about to give birth to
Messiah like Joanna Southcott — or to a litte
rabbits like Mary Tofts. They fought duels in ball
like M. le Pique in 1808 — the first human being
to be shot down in aerial combat — or directed
farm labourers with a megaphone and a tele
like Sydney Smith in his 'rheumatic armour'.

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The Age of Scandal was the reverse of being a pompous one. Gossip is not pompous. It was inevitably an age of intimacy and of nicknames. Creevey was a product of it, and, as Lytton Strachey has pointed out:

> There are no great names in his vocabulary — only nicknames: George III is 'old Nobs', the Regent 'Prinney', Wellington 'the Beau', Lord John Russell 'Pie and Thimble', Brougham, with whom he was on very friendly terms, is sometimes 'Bruffam', sometimes 'Beelzebub', and sometimes 'Old Wickedshifts'; and Lord Durham, who once remarked that one could 'jog along on £40,000 a year', is 'King Jog'.

It was because these people were aristocrats. The gossips lived in a small society which scarcely touched the middle classes of Wesley, nor the peasantry, no the Mob. Literature had for the first time sin Elizabeth become the medium instead of the pla thing of the gentry. They moved in the tight wo of the Drawing-rooms and of the Birthdays, kn each other as well as the boys at a public schoo England might know each other today, chatted al the latest scandal, and, because they had learne be literate, they wrote it down. So they remai literature, even in the days of Attlee, mainly i

so much from our minds before we can crawl inside theirs: before we can picture the powdered gentlemen in silks and laces, with their jewellery and the swords which they were ready to draw, with their sedan chairs and lap dogs and immense bets and deep potations. One of the commonest words about male clothes, in the letters of the reprobate Duke of Queensberry, was 'pretty'. One of his presents to the Prince Regent was a muff. Among the commonest reactions from readers and playgoers was that of tears. They adored their dogs and sent them tender messages in their letters. They were emotional about their friends, catty about their enemies, unusual in their hobbies and singular in themselves. They were perhaps the first people in English literature to be real enough for gossip.

Gossip must be about character. It is useless to gossip about an unknown character, impossible to tell a good story about a person without foibles; for it is the foible which gives the story point. These people had characters, were among the first people in England who were sufficiently peculiar, in a modern way, to be apprehended by us as personalities. They did extraordinary things: puffed and blew like Dr. Johnson, or went to executions like the sinister Selwyn, or constructed the astonishing tower of Fonthill like Beckford, or said that they were about to give birth to the Messiah like Joanna Southcott — or to a litter of rabbits like Mary Tofts. They fought duels in balloons like M. le Pique in 1808 — the first human being ever to be shot down in aerial combat — or directed their farm labourers with a megaphone and a telescope like Sydney Smith in his 'rheumatic armour'. Some

times they could never be sure whether they were men or women, like the Chevalier d'Eon, and sometimes they dislocated London's milk supply, as was the case with the fourth Duke of Queensberry — who was supposed to take his early bath in this liquid before it was retailed — with the consequence that for many years nobody in London felt secure about the morning tea.

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CHAPTER TWO

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HORACE WALPOLE, says Cunningham, had 'seen in the flesh two heroines of De Grammont and the Restoration, La Belle Jennings, and Arabella Churchill, and lived long enough to offer his coronet to two ladies (Mary and Agnes Berry) who lived far into the reign of Queen Victoria'.

So extensive a panorama, stretching from the diamond-hilted sword and ruffle to a group of top-hats standing round a railway train, cannot easily be treated as a whole, unless it is realized that the gap between swords and trains was really a narrow one. In an age whose men had carried muffs and whose women had worn head-dresses so high that they had to sit on low stools in their coaches, swords only began to go out of fashion in 1780, when umbrellas came in. (Umbrellas, indeed, were carried by officers during the battles of the Peninsular war, though Wellington was inclined to disapprove. 'The Guards may in uniform, when on duty at St. James's, carry them i they please; but in the field it is not only ridiculou but unmilitary.') Gentlemen wore wigs or powd till about 1800 — Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secr tary, cut off his pigtail in 1828 and sent it round to colleagues in an official box — while Creevey was specting a puffing billy, in a top-hat, in 1829. Th

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As late as 1784, de la Rochefoucauld was explaining, with reference to English race-horses, that 'when you are close to them you can hardly follow them with the eye — they travel more swiftly than a flash of lightning. The jockeys are obliged to keep their heads low in order to breathe. Their passage through the air is so swift that otherwise they would be choked'.

In 1829, Creevey had a lark of a very high order.

Today we have had a *lark* of a very high order. Lady Wilton sent over yesterday from Knowsley to say that the Loco Motive machine was to be upon the railway at such a place at 12 o'clock for the Knowsley party to ride in if they liked, and inviting this house to be of the party. So of course we were at our post in three carriages and some horsemen at the hour appointed. I had the satisfaction, for I can't call it *pleasure*, of taking a trip of five miles in it, which we did in just a quarter of an hour — that is, twenty miles an hour. As accuracy upon this subject was my great object, I held my watch in my hand at starting, and all the time; and as it has a second hand, I knew I could not be deceived; and so it turned out that there was not the difference of a second between the coachee or conductor and myself. But observe, during these five miles, the machine was occasionally made to put itself out or *go it*; and then we went at the rate of 23 miles an hour, and just with the same ease as to motion or absence of friction as the other reduced pace. But the quickest

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It is only [wrote G. M. Trevelyan] in the years that followed (1740-80) that we find a generation of men wholly characteristic of the Eighteenth Century ethos, a society with a mental outlook of its own, self-poised, self-judged, and self-approved, freed from the disturbing passions of the past, and not yet troubled with anxieties about a very different future which was soon to be brought upon the scene by the Industrial and French Revolutions. The gods mercifully gave mankind this little moment of peace between the religiou fanaticisms of the past and the fanaticisms of class and race that were speedily to arise and dominate time t come. In England it was an age of aristocracy an liberty; of the rule of law and the absence of reform of individual initiative and institutional decay; Latitudinarianism above and Wesleyanism below; the growth of humanitarian and philanthropic feeli and endeavour; of creative vigour in all the trades a arts that serve and adorn the life of man.

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> The late Lord Privy Seal has had a most ridiculous accident at Bath: he used to play in a little inner room; but one night some ladies had got it, and he was reduced to the public room; but being extremely absent and deep in politics, he walked through the little room to a convenience behind the curtain, from whence (still absent) he produced himself in a situation extremely diverting to the women; imagine his delicacy, and the passion he was in at their laughing!
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The Prince de Kaunitz, who wore satin stays, passed a portion of every morning in walking up and down a room in which four valets puffed a cloud of scented powder, but each of a different colour, in order that it might fall and amalgamate into the exact *nuance* that best suited their master's taste.

CAPTAIN JESSE

The British Army, in the third George's reign, use 6500 tons of flour for powdering every year.

England was then in advance of the continent. Th jeer at the eighteenth century, that its grandeur w in close proximity to a cess-pit, was only true of t court of Versailles. On the continent the diamo necklace and the *vaso di notte* might be side by side, English tourists complained of this, or reported i abnormal.

e [a French domestic] had the modesty to address rself to me, as understanding her Language, to esire me to beg one of the Sailors to give her a hamber Pot: upon which, thinking she was sick, as nany were upon the Deck, I advised her to go to the ide of the Ship, and my Servant should hold her gown for Fear of tumbling over Board: but she directly told me, that however practicable such a Situation might be for us, it would not suit her at all: and without more ado, or further Ceremony, *sans Façon*, *à la Françoise*, she plainly told me she wanted a Chamber Pot, *pour faire lacher l'Eau*; these were her words: so I forthwith got her accomodated with one, which she, with as little Shame as Decency and Ceremony made immediate use of, before all the Company, and then gave it with the utmost *Sangfroid* and Indifference, to my Servant to empty it over Board for her . . . The Woman, when she saw me, and some others of the Company laughing at her Action, talked reasonably and sensibly upon the Occasion, as any one could: asked in plain, *gras* and indelicate Words, what any of us would do, if a sudden Griping should take us, and we should want to go to the Necessary House. But tho' the Woman's Arguments were right in the main, yet she mistook only in this single very material Point: that altho' what she had done was absolutely necessary, yet she might have made an excuse to have gone under Deck; and have done privately, and by herself, what she chose to do before all the World. But such is the Difference between English and French Education and Customs!

REV. WILLIAM COLE

Wraxall was astonished to find that the King Naples would 'select his favoured individuals' attend him on the *chaise percée*, observing: 'Sono pransato. Adesso bisogna un buona panchiata.'

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England was then in advance of the continent. The jeer at the eighteenth century, that its grandeur was in close proximity to a cess-pit, was only true of the court of Versailles. On the continent the diamond necklace and the *vaso di notte* might be side by side, but English tourists complained of this, or reported it as abnormal.

She [a French domestic] had the modesty to address herself to me, as understanding her Language, to desire me to beg one of the Sailors to give her a Chamber Pot: upon which, thinking she was sick, as many were upon the Deck, I advised her to go to the Side of the Ship, and my Servant should hold her gown for Fear of tumbling over Board: but she directly told me, that however practicable such a Situation might be for us, it would not suit her at all: and without more ado, or further Ceremony, *sans Façon, à la Françoise*, she plainly told me she wanted a Chamber Pot, *pour faire lacher l'Eau*; these were her words: so I forthwith got her accomodated with one, which she, with as little Shame as Decency and Ceremony made immediate use of, before all the Company, and then gave it with the utmost *Sangfroid* and Indifference, to my Servant to empty it over Board for her . . . The Woman, when she saw me, and some others of the Company laughing at her Action, talked reasonably and sensibly upon the Occasion, as any one could: asked in plain, *gras* and indelicate Words, what any of us would do, if a sudden Griping should take us, and we should want to go to the Necessary House. But tho' the Woman's Arguments were right in the main, yet she mistook only in this single very material Point: that altho' what she had done was absolutely necessary, yet she might have made an excuse to have gone under Deck; and have done privately, and by herself, what she chose to do before all the World. But such is the Difference between English and French Education and Customs!

REV. WILLIAM COLE

Wraxall was astonished to find that the King of Naples would 'select his favoured individuals' to attend him on the *chaise percée*, observing: 'Sono ben pransato. Adesso bisogna un buona panchiata.' The

edious and unpleasant Chevalier de Grammont — ike Madame de Sevigné, one of Walpole's unaccountable enthusiasms from the previous century — had condescended to regard the court of Charles II as 'neither savage nor barbarous' (ni grossière ni sauvage). But now the boot was on the other foot. Horace Walpole, who would sit in the middle of the room at French inns, so far as possible from the wainscot, behind which he pretended that he could hear the 'old fleas talking of the days of Louis XIV', was disgusted with Versailles. 'The very footmen . . . wait behind their master . . . with a red handkerchief about their necks. Versailles, like everything else, is a mixture of parade and poverty.' 'There is one [barbarism], alas! I shall never get over — the dirt of this country: It is melancholy after the purity of Strawberry!'

I was giving him [Horace Walpole] a Description of my Entertainment at Madame Eynhouts, and partic larly of her continual hawking and spitting about Dinner time: he assured me it was the same in bet Company, and told me that not two Days befo dining at one of the greatest tables in Paris, with Great Deal of French Nobility, it was the same dur the whole Course of their Dinner, and that in p ticular, a blind Lady of Fashion and great Distinc for her Wit and Understanding (Mme du Deffa in the Middle of Dinner, while they were talking o Dauphin's little Prospect of Recovery, assured Company, that His Royal Highness had a gr Chance than they were aware of: that she had rec a Letter that very Morning from Fontainbleau, her an Account that he had happily had a stinking and foetid stool the evening before, an

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Dr. Johnson was even more emphatic than this. 'The French are a gross, ill-bred, untaught people; a lady there will spit on the floor, and rub it with her foot. What I gained by being in France was, learning to be better satisfied with my own country.'

Insanitary conditions on the continent were still rampant during the Napoleonic wars, and they seem to have preyed upon the minds of the English nobility even more. Sir Thomas Styles, who had fought with fists against Shelley at Eton, got a commission in the 1st Foot Guards; but he complained after leaving Lisbon that the 'fleas and vermin on the march had nearly driven him mad'. Finally they did do so. 'Our doctor, Mr. Bacot, a very kind fellow, anticipating brain fever, placed Styles in his camp bed, covered his head with wet towels, and desired his batman to watc over his master, and not to leave him for an instan However, the servant fell asleep, and during the nigh poor Styles got out of bed, unlocked his trunk whe his razors were kept, and with one of them deliberat cut his throat from ear to ear.' (Gronow.)

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Even in applied science, as opposed to the humanities, there was an attitude of learned dilettantism which is perhaps not unrefreshing when compared with the 'ologies' of our own day. Newton had shed his light upon physics: chemistry was concerned with phlogiston, and most of the other branches of learning were a matter for museums like junk-shops, for gentlemanly if dusty antiquaries and for letters to the Royal Society. The typical biologist was not Linnaeus, not Ray, not Pennant, not even the aristocratic Buffon: it was George Edwards — who dedicated his first volume to the President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, and a subsequent volume, as an afterthought, in enormous letters 'TO GOD' —

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There was a good deal of insanity about, nobody knew why, and some of the cures for this malady were no less Draconic. 'Fuseli mentioned [to Farington] that a Medical man who attended Bedlam had said that the greatest number of those confined were *Women in love*, and the next class in respect of number was *Hackney* and *Stage Coachmen*, caused it was supposed by the constant shaking exercise to which they are subject which affects the *pineal gland*.' Musk was given to the mad King George as a medicine for insanity, but the poor fellow 'begged that it might be discontinued'. 'Dr. Jenner', wrote the artist Farington in 1796, 'has found that in *insane patients* He has moderated their violence by keeping them sick with tartar emetic . . . Camphor water is an excellent medicine for nervous complaints.' The waters of many spas, moreover,

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Among proprietary medicines, 'Velno's Vegetable Syrup' brought £5000 a year to its proprietor, and was compounded of Goose-grass. The very greatest of all such brands was Dr. James's Powder – 'a well-known specific unhesitatingly recommended by Horace Walpole, which seems to have polished off Oliver Goldsmith in 1774. Its active principle was antimony'. Next to this cure came laudanum and calomel. 'I'll tell your honour,' confided a country doctor to Sir Walter Scott, 'my twa simples are just laudamy and calamy!' 'But, John, do you never happen to kill any of your patients?' 'Kill? Ou ay, may be sae. Whiles they die and whiles no; – but it's the will o' Provi dence. Ony how, your honour, it wad be lang befor it makes up for Flodden!'

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Hamilton begged Lady Charleville not to be shy about going to a masseur called Mahomet. He was black, sixty years old and, besides, her ladyship might wear a mask.

The new force, electricity, was attempted to be used medicinally, for instance by the diarist Barker; and John Yeoman, a country bumpkin, made trial of it in 1774:

then we was all Lactrified a Think is Imposable to describe. Its composed of a Mixture of cumbustables that if you Touch it the Fire flys out of it, besides You have Shuch Shudden Shock with it. We all hold hand in hand about 7 of us when I toucht it, and the Moment I was struck so hard in the Stomack that I could not stand, the Rest felt it as well as me, If there was 500 It would be all the same.

There was a belief that the breath of young women might be helpful in prolonging life. According to Mr. Wadd, one physician actually took lodgings in a girls' boarding-school for this purpose. 'I am myself,' wrote Philip Thicknesse in 1779, 'turned of sixty, and in general, though I have lived in various climates, and suffered severely both in body and mind, yet having always partaken of the breath of *young women, wherever they lay in my way*, I feel none of the infirmities, which so often strike the eyes and ears in this great city of sickness [Bath], by men many years younger than myself.'

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GLENBERVIE

The learned, elegant, but at the same time vigorous attitude to every facet of life had been shadowed forth by the gossips and cranks like Lord Hervey under the earlier Georges: it reached its height with Walpole: and persisted at least during the lifetime of Lord Byron — a lord, incidentally, who sorts rather oddly with the 'romantics' to whom he is usually assigned — whose *forte* was on the contrary in satire, whose letters were among the best of his works, who detested the shoddy raptures of Keats, who said of Horace W[illegible] 'my aristocracy, which is very fierce, mak[illegible] favourite of mine' — and the destruction [illegible] memoirs, by the pse[illegible] oet Moore, was [illegible] major tragedies of [illegible] literature.

difference between a Cockney accent and a Devonshire one now. Rhymes which were perfect in those days have become what they call 'eye-rhymes' today, so that it is possible to reconstruct from them something of the way in which people once spoke. Everybody knows that 'tea' was pronounced 'tay'. 'Spoil' rhymed with 'mile'.

> Sally, Sally, don't deny,
> But for God's sake tell me why
> You have flirted so to spoil
> That once lovely youth, Carlisle?

It is curious [wrote Samuel Rogers] how fashion changes pronunciation. In my youth everybody said 'Lonnon', not 'London'. Fox said 'Lonnon' to the last; and so did Crowe. The now fashionable pronunciation of several words is to me at least very offensive: 'cóntemplate' is bad enough; but 'bálcony' makes me sick.

The Prince Regent [according to Gronow] still said 'Obleege' for 'oblige', though this pronunciation was becoming unfashionable. John Kemble, who was teaching him elocution, exclaimed with exasperation 'Sir, may I beseech your Royal Highness to open your Royal jaws and say 'oblige'?

Surnames as well as place-names received a different inflection. Mrs. Thrale would have called Lord Byron 'Biron' and Horace Walpole pronounced Stowe to rhyme with 'plough'.

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The Prince Regent [according to Gronow] still said 'Obleege' for 'oblige', though this pronunciation was becoming unfashionable. John Kemble, who was teaching him elocution, exclaimed with exasperation 'Sir, may I beseech your Royal Highness to open your Royal jaws and say 'oblige'?

Surnames as well as place-names received a different inflection. Mrs. Thrale would have called Lord Byron 'Biron' and Horace Walpole pronounced Stowe to rhyme with 'plough'.

A producer who ventured into the past, in fact, might have been invited to drink tay on the balcóny with Lord Biron, where he would have been obleeged to contémplate the unspiled agrémens of Lonnon.

One of the earliest existing phonograph records is

of a speech by Gladstone, who stands half-way between ourselves and the eighteenth century. It sounds already like a music hall imitation of a comic clergyman. In the Age of Scandal itself, it seems reasonably certain that people spoke even more slowly, even more oratorically, with even more pauses for mental punctuation between the concessive clauses. They certainly read more slowly.

Another surprise for the producer would have lain in the matter of attitude. For a gentleman in Walpole's period was judged not only by his accent but also by his deportment, as if he were a ballet. It was literally true that a gentleman had to move in a stylized way. George III complained that Lord Liverpool's 'motions were never very graceful'. The fat Bubb-Doddington, when created Lord Melcombe, was found 'before a looking glass in his new robes, practising attitudes and debating with himself upon the most graceful mode of carrying his coronet'. (Unfortunately, on being presented to Queen Charlotte, his breeches 'in the act of kneeling down, forgot their duty, and broke lose from their moorings in a very indecorous manner'.)

Books like *The Dancing Master* mentioned by M. Delahaute provided 'the Rules required for walking, saluting and making bows in all kinds of company', with a chapter entitled 'How to take off your Hat and replace it'. Frenilly 'took a month's course of instruction from the celebrated Petit, at twelve francs a lesson', in order to learn how to introduce himself to a 'circle'. 'It was by no means an inferior science to know how to enter a drawing-room in which some thirty ladies and gentlemen were sitting in a circle round the fire, with both assurance and grace; to



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HIGH LIFE

netrate this circle and to make a slight inclination you walked round it; to make your way to your ostess, and to retire with dignity and without ruffling our fine clothes, for you were dressed in lace, and your hair was dressed in thirty-six curls, all powdered; you were carrying your hat under your arm, your sword reached to your heels, and you were armed with a huge muff, the smallest being two and a half feet wide!' They moved, said Gronow, 'with a studied dignity of posture'. The Marquis of Abercorn, though this was more a matter of etiquette than of posture, was 'stated to have always gone out shooting in his Blue Ribbon, and to have required his house-maids to wear white kid gloves when they made his bed'.

Food and drink, from the enormous quantity in which they were consumed, would have been another of the surprises for a modern mind, and there would have been a hundred lesser reasons to raise the eye-brows. For instance, the people themselves were smaller than we are. 'The increase in the height o our countrymen', wrote Miss Hawkins in 182 'attests the superior good sense with which childre are now reared.' 'From a study of the dresses that remain', writes an authority on clothes, 'we may fo the opinion that men and women were on the wh smaller than they are today, the women slighte build and the men more stocky.' A Duchess of land must surely have been very slight, when she c compress her waist into the size of an orange a half.

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For the rest, the eye would be taken by scattered curiosities. Peas were correctly eaten with a knife

orks had only three prongs. There were no dessert poons. The games of ombre, picquet, basset, whisk, rag and lanterloo at which they gambled were played with cards whose Kings, Queens and Knaves had feet.

Throughout England [wrote the son of the duc de Liancourt in 1784] it is the custom to breakfast together, the meal resembling a dinner or supper in France. The commonest breakfast hour is 9 o'clock and by that time the ladies are fully dressed with their hair properly done for the day. Breakfast consists of tea and bread and butter in various forms. In the houses of the rich you have coffee, chocolate and so on. The morning newspapers are on the table and those who want to do so, read them during breakfast, so that the conversation is not of a lively nature. At 10 o'clock or 10.30 each member of the party goes off on his own pursuit — hunting, fishing or walking. So the day passes till 4 o'clock but at 4 o'clock precisely you must present yourself in the drawing-room with a great deal more ceremony than we are accustomed to in France. This sudden change of social manners is quite astonishing and I was deeply struck by it. In the morning you come down in riding-boots and a shabby coat, you sit where you like, you behave exactly as if you were by yourself, no one takes any notice of you and it is all extremely comfortable. But in the evening unless you have just arrived, you must be well-washed and well-groomed. The standard of politeness is uncomfortably high — strangers go first into the dining-room and sit near the hostess and are served in seniority in accordance with a rigid etiquette. In fact for the first few days I was tempted to think that it was done for a joke.

Dinner is one of the most wearisome of English experiences, lasting, as it does, for four or five hours. The first two are spent in eating and you are compel

to exercise your stomach to the full in order to please your host. He asks you the whole time whether you like the food and presses you to eat more, with the result that, out of pure politeness, I do nothing but eat from the time that I sit down until the time when I get up from the table.

The courses are much the same as in France except that the use of sauce is unknown in the English kitchen and that one seldom sees a *ragout*. All the dishes consist of various meats either boiled or roasted and of joints weighing about twenty or thirty pounds.

After the sweets, you are given water in small bowls of very clean glass in order to rinse out your mouth — a custom which strikes me as extremely unfortunate. The more fashionable folk do not rinse out their mouths, but that seems to me even worse; for if you use the water to wash your hands, it becomes dirty and quite disgusting. This ceremony over, the cloth is removed and you behold the most beautiful table that it is possible to see. It is indeed remarkable that the English are so much given to the use of mahogany; not only are their tables generally made of it, but also their doors and seats and the handrails of their staircases. Yet it is just as dear in England as in France. It is a matter which I do not pretend to understand, but I am inclined to think that the English must be richer than we are; certainly I have myself observed not only that everything costs twice as much here as in France but that the English seize every opportunity to use things which are expensive in themselves. At all events, their tables are made of the most beautiful wood and always have a brilliant polish like that of the finest glass. After the removal of the cloth, the table is covered with all kinds of wine, for even gentlemen of modest means always keep a large stock of good wine. On the middle of the table there is a small quantity of fruit, a few biscuits (to stimulate thirst) and some butter, for many English people take it at dessert.

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At the end of two or three hours a servant announces that tea is ready and conducts the gentlemen from their drinking to join the ladies in the drawing-room

where they are usually employed in making tea and coffee. After making tea, one generally plays whist, and at midnight there is cold meat for those who are hungry. While the game is going on, there is punch on a table for those who want it.
I have entered into these details of my experiences at Euston, where I stayed with the Duke of Grafton, because the manner of life is the same throughout England and the English manner being very different from our own, some details concerning it may be of interest.

In the short time that has elapsed between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, a physiological change has taken place in the human body. It has not only grown bigger, but it also moves itself faster — not merely by mechanical means, but of itself. It changes its positions faster — no 'studied gestures' — runs faster — as one can see by looking at athletic records — boxes faster — for the endless rounds of an eighteenth-century match often had only one blow really delivered — speaks faster, reads faster and even eats faster. The eighteenth century managed to eat so much more than we do because it ate more slowly. It could drink more, by drinking all night. Old Lady Dorothy Nevill, who was born in the reign of George IV, survived to complain in 1910 because 'everything is served at such lightning speed that it is as much as one can do to swallow the few mouthfuls called dinner before one's plate has been snatched away. The whole system of these hurried modern meals is uncomfortable and unhealthy'. It would be interesting to find out whether the pulse rate has gone up.

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CHAPTER THREE

Royal Gossip

THE central feature was that the writers were patrician.

The aristocracy was a compact body, less numerous than the peerage of the present day, and it was accustomed to foregather at fixed times and places. When George III's reign began, there were only 174 peers (there are nearly a thousand now). There were 'seasons' at Bath or at Tunbridge Wells or in London, then small enough for its society to be a single unit, and everybody met at the Drawing-rooms and at the Birthdays of the royal family. Their literature was one of personalities. Great thoughts on large political or on moral issues were absent leaving only the trivialities of life and the anecdotes about character which are nowadays the bane of serious historians. The nature of the 'bootikins' worn by Horace Walpole for his gout, or the problem of what Dr. Johnson used to do with his dried orange peel, were the core of the age. Horry's bootikins, it has been suspected, were bed-socks made of oiled silk outside and wool within. The orange-peel question though elucidated in the 358th letter in Mrs. Piozzi's collection, still remains a vexing mystery to many people in 1950. It came to a head in 1775.

Next morning [says Boswell] I won a small bet from Lady Diana Beauclerk, by asking him as to one of h

particularities, which her ladyship said I durst not do. It seems he had been frequently observed at the Club to put into his pocket the Seville oranges, after he had squeezed the juice of them into the drink which he made for himself. Beauclerk and Garrick talked of it to me, and seemed to think that he had a strange unwillingness to be discovered. We could not divine what he did with them; and this was the bold question to be put. I saw on his table the spoils of the preceding night, some fresh peels nicely scraped and cut into pieces. 'Oh, Sir,' said I, 'I now partly see what you do with the squeezed oranges which you put in your pocket at the Club.' JOHNSON: 'I have a great love for them.' BOSWELL: 'And pray, Sir, what do you do with them? You scrape them, it seems, very neatly, and what next?' JOHNSON: 'Let them dry, Sir.' BOSWELL: 'And what next?' JOHNSON: 'Nay, Sir, you shall know their fate no further.' BOSWELL: 'Then the world must be left in the dark. It must be said,' assuming a mock solemnity, 'he scraped them and let them dry; but what he did with them next he never could be prevailed upon to tell.' JOHNSON: 'Nay, Sir, you should say it more emphatically: — he could not be prevailed upon, even by his dearest friends, to tell.'

The prime subject for conversation, however, was the idiosyncrasy of the reigning monarch, rather than of his subjects. The literate aristocrats surrounded him on formal occasions several times a year. Twice a week some part of them lined the walls at the levée, while he walked round the room with the Queen, saying something appropriate to everybody who had come.

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Horace Walpole met five kings, though he did not live to see the last two on the throne. His recollection

of the first was clear but meagre, for he had bee
only ten years old at presentation.

Accordingly [he wrote as an old man, for the amusement of his beloved Misses Berry], the night but one before the King began his last journey, my mother carried me at ten at night to the apartment of the Countess of Walsingham on the ground floor, towards the garden of St. James's, which opened into that of her aunt the Duchess of Kendal's. . . . Notice being given that the King was come down to supper, Lady Walsingham took me alone into the Duchess's ante-room, where we found alone the King and her. I knelt down and kissed his hand. He said a few words to me, and my conductress led me back to my mother.

The person of the King is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday. It was that of an elderl man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures an coins; not tall; of an aspect rather good than august with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, an breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of th same colour, and a blue riband over all. So entire was he my object that I do not believe I once looked the Duchess; but as I could not avoid seeing her entering the room, I remember that just beyond Majesty stood a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old la but I did not retain the least idea of her features, know what the colour of her dress was.

George the First [wrote the Earl of Chesterfield] an honest, dull, German gentleman . . . lazy inactive even in his pleasures, which were there lowly sensual . . . He was diffident of his own p which made him speak little in public, and pref his social, which were his favourite, hours the pany of wags and buffoons. Even his mistress dutchess of Kendal, with whom he passed most

time, and who had all influence over him, was very little above an idiot . . . His views and affections were singly confined to the narrow compass of electorate; England was too big for him. If he had nothing great as a king, he had nothing bad as a man; and if he does not adorn, at least he will not stain the annals of this country. In private life he would have been loved and esteemed as a good citizen, a good friend, and a good neighbour.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu added to this description, about his relations with the Schulemberg — his mistress who was created Duchess of Kendal — that 'he often went to her apartments to cut paper, which was his chief employment there', and Walpole capped the character-sketch by noting that he was superstitious. George I had been told that he would die within a year of his imprisoned wife, Sophia Dorothea, and she had died before the journey on which he gave his audience to little Horace Walpole.

Most Germans are superstitious [wrote the child sixty years later], even such as have few impressions of religion. George gave such credit to the denunciation, that on the eve of his last departure, he took leave of his son and the Princess of Wales with tears, telling them he should never see them more. It was certainly his own approaching fate that melted him, not the thought of quitting for ever two persons he hated . . . I do not know whether it was about the same period, that in a tender mood he promised the Duchess of Kendal, that if she survived him, and it were possible for the departed to return to this world, he would make her a visit. The Duchess, on his death (1727), so much expected the accomplishment of that engagement, that a large raven, or some black fowl, flying into one of the windows of her villa at Isleworth, she was persuaded it

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Accordingly [he wrote as an old man, for the amusement of his beloved Misses Berry], the night but one before the King began his last journey, my mother carried me at ten at night to the apartment of the Countess of Walsingham on the ground floor, towards the garden of St. James's, which opened into that of her aunt the Duchess of Kendal's....

Notice being given that the King was come down to supper, Lady Walsingham took me alone into the Duchess's ante-room, where we found alone the King and her. I knelt down and kissed his hand. He said a few words to me, and my conductress led me back to my mother.

The person of the King is as perfect in my memory as if I saw him but yesterday. It was that of an elderly man, rather pale, and exactly like his pictures and coins; not tall; of an aspect rather good than august; with a dark tie-wig, a plain coat, waistcoat, and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, with stockings of the same colour, and a blue riband over all. So entirely was he my object that I do not believe I once looked at the Duchess; but as I could not avoid seeing her on entering the room, I remember that just beyond his Majesty stood a very tall, lean, ill-favoured old lady; but I did not retain the least idea of her features, nor know what the colour of her dress was.

George the First [wrote the Earl of Chesterfield] was an honest, dull, German gentleman ... lazy and inactive even in his pleasures, which were therefore lowly sensual ... He was diffident of his own parts, which made him speak little in public, and prefer in his social, which were his favourite, hours the company of wags and buffoons. Even his mistress, the dutchess of Kendal, with whom he passed most of his

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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu added to this description, about his relations with the Schulemberg — his mistress who was created Duchess of Kendal — that 'he often went to her apartments to cut paper, which was his chief employment there', and Walpole capped the character-sketch by noting that he was superstitious. George I had been told that he would die within a year of his imprisoned wife, Sophia Dorothea, and she had died before the journey on which he gave his audience to little Horace Walpole.

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was the soul of her departed monarch so accoutred, and received and treated it with all the respect and tenderness of duty, till the royal bird or she took their last flight.

The next king of Walpole's, George II, was ruled by his wife, Queen Caroline. He was a touchy, comic, obstinate, small man, with a mania for being thought to be brave and prepotent. He was charming, because he was straightforward. Whether he was in a temper or not, he spoke from his heart. He did not lie about his mistresses to his wife, whom he adored, and his tantrums or his sulks, the small deceptions about his courage or transparent boasts and pathetic tears when Caroline died, were true to himself. Lord Hervey gave a vivid description of him, in relating an evening *à trois*, when the King had come back from Hanover in a state of exasperation, suffering from the royal piles and furious at having been forced to leave his latest mistress behind him in that country.

His Majesty stayed about five minutes in the gallery; snubbed the Queen, who was drinking chocolate, for being always stuffing; the Princess Emily for not hearing him; the Princess Caroline for being grown fat; the Duke of Cumberland for standing awkwardly; Lord Hervey for not knowing what relation the Prince of Sultzbach was to the Elector Palatine; and then carried the Queen to walk, and be resnubbed, in the garden. . . .
One evening among the rest, as soon as Lord Hervey came into the room, the Queen, who was knotting whilst the King walked backwards and forwards, began jocosely to attack Lord Hervey upon an answer just published to a book of his friend Bishop Hoadley's

on the Sacrament, in which the Bishop was very ill treated; but before she had uttered half of what she had a mind to say, the King interrupted her, and told her she always loved talking of such nonsense and things she knew nothing of; adding, that, if it were not for such foolish people loving to talk of those things when they were written, the fools who wrote upon them would never think of publishing their nonsense, and disturbing the Government with impertinent disputes that nobody of any sense ever troubled himself about. The Queen bowed, and said, 'Sir, I only did it to let Lord Hervey know that his friend's book had not met with that general approbation he had pretended.' 'A pretty fellow for a friend!' said th King, turning to Lord Hervey. 'Pray what is it tha charms you in him? His pretty limping gait' (an then he acted the Bishop's lameness), 'or his nas stinking breath? — phaugh! — or his silly laugh, wh he grins in your face for nothing, and shews his na rotten teeth? Or is it his great honesty that char your Lordship? — his asking a thing of me for one m and, when he came to have it in his own powe bestow, refusing the Queen to give it to the very for whom he had asked it? Or do you admire his science that makes him now put out a book that he was Bishop of Winchester, for fear his consci might hurt his preferment, he kept locked up i chest? Is his conscience so much improve [etc. etc.]. 'My Lord, I am very sorry you choos friends so ill; but I cannot help saying, if the Bis Winchester is your friend, you have a great pup a very dull fellow and a great rascal for your It is a very pretty thing for such scoundrels, wh are raised by favour so much above their dese talking and writing their stuff, to give troubl Government that has shewn them that fav very modest in a canting hypocritical kna crying, "*The Kingdom of Christ is not of this*

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During the whole time the King was speaking, th Queen, by smiling and nodding in proper places endeavoured all she could, but in vain, to make he court by seeming to approve everything he said; an well, indeed, might she approve it, for it was almos word for word what she had said to Lord Hervey o this subject in the summer when the book first cam out, which Lord Hervey, to flatter her, whilst sh flattered the King, gave her to understand he remem bered, by telling her very emphatically, when sh asked him *what he had to say to all this*, 'Your Majest knows already all I have to say on this subject;' an then added (to sweeten the King), 'but how partia soever I may be to my friend, I assure your Majesty am not so partial to myself as to imagine, let his caus be ever so good, that I should be able to plead it wit success against the very able counsel that I have jus now heard draw up the charge on the other side.'

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This the Queen swallowed too, and began to talk on something else, till the conversation (I know not by what transition) fell on the ridiculous expense it was to people, by the money given to servants, to go and stay two or three days with their acquaintance in the country; upon which the Queen said she had found it a pretty large expense this summer to visit her friends even in town. 'That is your own fault,' said the King 'for my father, when he went to people's houses i... town, never was fool enough to be giving away h... money.' The Queen pleaded for her excuse that sh... had only done what Lord Grantham had told her s... was to do: to which his Majesty replied, that my Lo... Grantham was a pretty director; that she was alw... asking some fool or other what she was to do; and t... none but a fool would ask another fool's advice. ... Queen then appealed to Lord Hervey whether it ... not now as customary to give money in town as i... country. He knew it was not, but said it was. ... added, too, that to be sure, were it not so for pa... lars, it would certainly be expected from her Ma... To which the King said, 'Then she may stay at ... as I do. You do not see me running into every p...

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It was the other Horace Walpole, the letter-writer's uncle, who had pretended to cry so unconvincingly.

The King owned a handsome leg adorned with the Garter; when irritated he had been known to 'kick his hat and wig about the room'; he was particularly mean with his money, which was why he had been so cross with the Queen about her tips and about the expense of Merlin's Cave, and he personally presented Sir Robert Walpole with little more than a bad diamond with a flaw in it. He was thought to reward his mistresses by giving them sweepstake tickets.

Of George III, insatiably inquisitive, talkative, silly, repetitive, obstinate, hard-working, kind and nobly tragic, the best descriptions were in Boswell's account of his conversation with Dr. Johnson, or in Fanny Burney's story of her meeting with him at Kew, when mad.

I had proceeded in my quick way, nearly half th
round, when I suddenly perceived, through som
trees, two or three figures. Relying on the instructior
of Dr. John [Willis], I concluded them to be workme
and gardeners; yet I tried to look sharp, and in
doing, as they were less shaded, I thought I saw tl
person of his Majesty!

Alarmed past all possible expression, I waited not
know more, but turning back, ran off with all
might. But what was my terror to hear myself p
sued! — to hear the voice of the King himself lou
and hoarsely calling after me: 'Miss Burney! N
Burney!'

I protest I was ready to die. I knew not in what s
he might be at the time; I only knew the orders to k
out of his way were universal; that the Queen wo
highly disapprove of any unauthorized meeting,

at the very action of my running away might deeply, n his present irritable state, offend him. Nevertheless, n I ran, too terrified to stop, and in search of some hort passage, for the garden is full of little labyrinths, by which I might escape.

The steps still pursued me, and still the poor hoarse and altered voice rang in my ears — more and more footsteps resounded frightfully behind me — the attendants all running, to catch their eager master, and the voices of the two Doctor Willises loudly exhorting him not to heat himself so unmercifully.

Heavens, how I ran! . . .

Soon after, I heard other voices, shriller, though less nervous, call out: 'Stop! Stop! Stop!'

I could by no means consent. . . .

I knew not to what I might be exposed, should the malady be then high, and take the turn of resentment. Still, therefore, on I flew; and such was my speed, so almost incredible to relate or recollect, that I fairly believe no one of the whole party could have overtaken me, if these words, from one of the attendants, had not reached me: 'Doctor Willis begs you to stop!' ' cannot! I cannot!' I answered, still flying on, when h called out: 'You must, ma'am; it hurts the King to run

Then, indeed, I stopped — in a state of fear amountin to agony. I turned round, I saw the two Doctors ha got the King between them, and three attendants Dr. Willis's were hovering about. . . .

When they were within a few yards of me, the K called out: 'Why did you run away?'

Shocked at a question impossible to answer, y little assured by the mild tone of his voice, I insta forced myself forward, to meet him. . . .

The effort answered: I looked up, and met a wonted benignity of countenance, though some still of wildness in his eyes. Think, however, surprise, to feel him put both his hands round n shoulders, and then kiss my cheek!

It was the other Horace Walpole, the letter-writer's uncle, who had pretended to cry so unconvincingly.

The King owned a handsome leg adorned with the Garter; when irritated he had been known to 'kick his hat and wig about the room'; he was particularly mean with his money, which was why he had been so cross with the Queen about her tips and about the expense of Merlin's Cave, and he personally presented Sir Robert Walpole with little more than a bad diamond with a flaw in it. He was thought to reward his mistresses by giving them sweepstake tickets.

Of George III, insatiably inquisitive, talkative, silly, repetitive, obstinate, hard-working, kind and nobly tragic, the best descriptions were in Boswell's account of his conversation with Dr. Johnson, or in Fanny Burney's story of her meeting with him at Kew, when mad.

I had proceeded in my quick way, nearly half the round, when I suddenly perceived, through some trees, two or three figures. Relying on the instructions of Dr. John [Willis], I concluded them to be workmen and gardeners; yet I tried to look sharp, and in so doing, as they were less shaded, I thought I saw the person of his Majesty!

Alarmed past all possible expression, I waited not to know more, but turning back, ran off with all my might. But what was my terror to hear myself pursued! – to hear the voice of the King himself loudly and hoarsely calling after me: 'Miss Burney! Miss Burney!'

I protest I was ready to die. I knew not in what state he might be at the time; I only knew the orders to keep out of his way were universal; that the Queen would highly disapprove of any unauthorized meeting, and

at the very action of my running away might deeply, n his present irritable state, offend him. Nevertheless, n I ran, too terrified to stop, and in search of some hort passage, for the garden is full of little labyrinths, by which I might escape.

The steps still pursued me, and still the poor hoarse and altered voice rang in my ears — more and more footsteps resounded frightfully behind me — the attendants all running, to catch their eager master, and the voices of the two Doctor Willises loudly exhorting him not to heat himself so unmercifully.

Heavens, how I ran! . . .

Soon after, I heard other voices, shriller, though less nervous, call out: 'Stop! Stop! Stop!'

I could by no means consent. . . .

I knew not to what I might be exposed, should the malady be then high, and take the turn of resentment. Still, therefore, on I flew; and such was my speed, so almost incredible to relate or recollect, that I fairly believe no one of the whole party could have overtaken me, if these words, from one of the attendants, had not reached me: 'Doctor Willis begs you to stop!' ' cannot! I cannot!' I answered, still flying on, when h called out: 'You must, ma'am; it hurts the King to run

Then, indeed, I stopped — in a state of fear amountin to agony. I turned round, I saw the two Doctors ha got the King between them, and three attendants Dr. Willis's were hovering about. . . .

When they were within a few yards of me, the K called out: 'Why did you run away?'

Shocked at a question impossible to answer, y little assured by the mild tone of his voice, I insta forced myself forward, to meet him. . . .

The effort answered: I looked up, and met a wonted benignity of countenance, though some still of wildness in his eyes. Think, however, surprise, to feel him put both his hands round m shoulders, and then kiss my cheek!

wonder I did not really sink, so exquisite was my fright when I saw him spread out his arms! In-oluntarily, I concluded he meant to crush me: but he Willises, who have never seen him till this fatal llness, not knowing how very extraordinary an action his was with him, simply smiled and looked pleased, upposing, perhaps, it was his customary salutation!

He now spoke in such terms of his pleasure in seeing me, that I soon lost the whole of my terror; astonish-ment to find him so nearly well, and gratification to see him so pleased, removed every uneasy feeling. . . .

What a conversation followed! When he saw me fear-less, he grew more and more alive, and made me walk close by his side, away from the attendants, and even the Willises themselves, who, to indulge him, retreated. I own myself not completely composed, but alarm I could entertain no more.

Everything that came uppermost in his mind he men-tioned; he seemed to have just such remains of his flightiness as heated his imagination without derangin his reason, and robbed him of all control over hi speech, though nearly in his perfect state of mind as to his opinions.

What did he not say! He opened his whole heart to me — expounded all his sentiments, and acquainted me with all his intentions.

He assured me he was quite well — as well as he had ever been in his life; and then inquired how I did, and how I went on? and whether I was more comfortable If these questions, in their implication, surprised m imagine how that surprise must increase when h proceeded to explain them! He asked after the coa-jutrix [Miss Burney was not on the best terms with h superior in the Queen's service, a German drag called Mrs. Schwellenberg], laughing, and sayin 'Never mind her — don't be oppressed — I am yo friend! don't let her cast you down! I know you h a hard time of it — but don't mind her!'

lmost thunderstruck with astonishment, I merely urtsied to his kind 'I am your friend,' and said othing.

Then presently he added: 'Stick to your father — stick to your own family — let them be your objects.'

How readily I assented!

Again he repeated all I have just written, nearly in the same words, but ended it more seriously: he suddenly stopped, and held me to stop too, and putting his hand on his breast, in the most solemn manner, he gravely and slowly said: 'I will protect you! — I promise you that — and therefore depend upon me!'

I thanked him; and the Willises, thinking him rather too elevated, came to propose my walking on. 'No, no, no!' he cried, a hundred times in a breath; and their good humour prevailed, and they let him again walk on with his new companion.

He then gave me a history of his pages, animating almost into a rage, as he related his subjects of dis-pleasure with them, particularly with Mr. Ernst, who he told me, had been brought up by himself. I hop his ideas upon these men are the result of the mistake of his malady.

Then he asked me some questions that very great distressed me, relating to information given him his illness, from various motives, but which he s pected to be false, and which I knew he had reasor suspect; yet was it most dangerous to set anyth right, as I was not aware what might be the view their having been stated wrong. I was as discreet knew how to be, and I hope I did no mischief; bu was the worst part of the dialogue.

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Dr. Willis, quite alarmed at this exertion, feared he would do himself harm, and again proposed a separation. 'No! No! No!' he exclaimed, 'not yet; I have something I must just mention first.'

Dr. Willis, delighted to comply, even when uneasy at compliance, again gave way.

The good King then greatly affected me. He began upon my revered old friend, Mrs. Delany; and he spoke of her with such warmth — such kindness! 'She was my friend!' he cried, 'and I loved her as a friend! I have made a memorandum when I lost her — I will shew it to you.'

He pulled out a pocket-book, and rummaged some time, but to no purpose.

The tears stood in his eyes — he wiped them, and Dr Willis again became very anxious. 'Come, sir,' h cried, 'now do you come in and let the lady go on he walk — come, now, you have talked a long while — s we'll go in — if your Majesty pleases.'

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This was very unlike himself, and startled the two
good doctors, who could not bear to cross him, and
were exulting at my seeing his great amendment, but
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Finding we now must part, he stopped to take leave,
and renewed again his charges about the coadjutrix.
'Never mind her!' he cried, 'depend upon me! I will
be your friend as long as I live! — I here pledge myself
to be your friend!' And then saluted me again just as
at the meeting, and suffered me to go on.

The middle-aged, maidenly and short-sighted Alice,
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> The coffin having been lowered into the grave, and the dust thrown upon it, Garter-King-at-Arms proclaimed the titles of the deceased. Once more the volumed tones of the organ pealed along the vaulted roof and through the fretted aisles. [It was his beloved Handel: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'] The mourners re-arranged themselves, and departed nearly in the order in which they came. The solemn ceremony was at an end. The soldiers, who had lined the aisles, extinguished their tapers and retired. Many persons, indeed, lingered to look down on the coffin and its splendid paraphernalia. Soon, however, the last faint note of the organ died away in the distance; the last straggler withdrew through the ancient Gothic portal; and then the once powerful and flattered monarch was left alone in a darkness and silence, no more awful, perhaps, but even more desolate, than had lately over-shadowed him in the neighbouring tower of the Plantagenets.

George IV, the 'first gentleman in Europe', w had signed himself 'Florizel' when wooing an act in the part of Perdita — whom he subsequently ab doned — and who grew fat and alcoholic before went to pieces altogether, was best described by I Malmesbury and in the Greville, Creevey and c papers, Considered a poltroon by nearly everybo

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His mother [said Dr. Doran of Florizel] had been his first governess; and at eight years of age he had been delivered by his father to Dr. Markham and Cyril Jackson, with the injunction to treat him as they would any private gentleman's son, and *to flog him* whenever he deserved it. The prince . . . took the earliest opportunity of shewing his antagonism against his father . . . The young prince's preceptors were changed in 1776. Lord Bruce became *governor* in place of Lord Holdernesse; but he retired almost immediately, vexed, it is said, at the prince having detected him in the commission of a false quantity. Bishop Hurd and the Rev. Mr. Arnold . . . adopted the old plan of severity; but on endeavouring to carry it into effect, when the high-spirited boys were considerably advanced in their teens, one or both of the royal pupils turned on their preceptor, Arnold, who was about to most grossly castigate them, tore the weapon from his hand, and *roughly administered to him the punishment with which they themselves had been threatened.*

Another of the third George's sons, the Duke of Sussex, had been flogged for having asthma, and the Princess Sophia told the Hon. Amelia Murray 'that

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Unwisely brought up, badly in debt, entangled with a morganatic marriage and surrounded by cads, the unfortunate Prince of Wales (George IV) was married to Caroline of Brunswick, whom he had never seen.

I [said Lord Malmesbury, whose surname had been Harris before he was raised to the peerage], according to the established etiquette, introduced (no one else being in the room) the Princess Caroline to him. She very properly, in consequence of my saying to her it was the right mode of proceeding, attempted to kneel to him. He raised her (gracefully enough) and em- braced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling me to him, said: 'Harris, I am not well; pray, get me a glass of brandy.'

Malmesbury recommended a glass of water, for th future King was a little drunk already — but it is fa to point out that his intended bride suffered fro what is now called body odour. He retired witho another word — leaving Caroline to exclaim, 'M Dieu, est ce que le prince est toujours comme cela? and he was quite drunk at the marriage.

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discussion of the Duke's victories at various points of the compass. 'The question is, *how am I to get rid of this damned Princess of Wales?*'

I had heard a great deal [wrote Creevey] of the Prince's drinking, but, during the time that I speak of, I never saw him the least drunk but once, and I was myself pretty much the occasion of it. We were dining at the Pavilion, and poor Fonblanque, a dolorous fop of a lawyer, and a member of Parliament too, was one of the guests. After drinking some wine, I could not resist having some jokes at Fonblanque's expense, which the Prince encouraged greatly . . . the Prince said he should die if I did not stop . . . In the evening, at about ten or eleven o'clock, he said he would go to the ball at the Castle, and said I should go with him. So I went in his coach, and he entered the room with his arm through mine, everybody standing and getting upon benches to see him. He was certainly tipsy, and so, of course, was I, but not much . . . He used to drink a great quantity of wine at dinner, and was very fond of making any newcomer drunk by drinking wine with him very frequently, always recommending his strongest wines, and at last some remarkably strong old brandy which he used to call Diabolino.

The high-jinks at Brighton, in the famous Pavil[ion] which the Regent had called into being, often ros[e to] comic levels.

To return [said the same scandalmonger] to S[heri]dan at Brighton in the year 1805. His poi[nt of] difference with the Prince being at an end, She[ridan] entered into whatever fun was going on at the Pa[vilion] as if he had been a boy, tho' he was then 55 y[ears]

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ge. Upon one occasion he came into the drawing-
oom disguised as a police officer to take up the
Dowager Lady Sefton for playing at some unlawful
ame; and at another time, when we had a phantas-
nagoria in the Pavilion, and all were shut up in per-
fect darkness, he continued to seat himself upon the
lap of Madame Gerobtzoff (?), a haughty Russian
dame, who made row enough for the whole town to
hear her.

Mrs. Creevey, who had a still finer eye for the ridiculous than had her husband, wrote to say that

When the Prince appeared [after dinner], I instantly saw he had got more wine than usual, and it was still more evident that the German Baron was extremely drunk . . . Afterwards the Prince led all th party to the table where the maps lie, to see him shoo with an air-gun at a target placed at the end of th room. He did it very skilfully, and wanted all th ladies to attempt it. The girls and I excused ourselv on account of our short sight; but Lady Downshi hit a fiddler in the dining-room, Miss Johnstone a do and Bloomfield the ceiling . . . I soon had enough this, and retired to the fire with Mac . . . At last waltz was played by the band, and the Prince offer to waltz with Miss Johnstone, but very quietly, a once round the table made him giddy, so of cours was proper for his partner to be giddy too; but cruelly only thought of supporting himself, so reclined on the Baron.

The fact was that Florizel was a weak charmer a tender heart, who could not help promising assist to anybody that seemed to need it; and who sequently had to break his promises. His soft na when he was King, made it difficult to secur

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The unfeeling dog had felt too much, and was tired f feeling.

he King complains that he is tired to death of all the eople about him. He is less violent about the Catholic question, tired of that too, and does not wish to hear any more about it. He leads a most extraordinary life — never gets up till six in the afternoon. They come to him and open the window-curtains at six or seven o'clock in the morning; he breakfasts in bed, does whatever business he can be brought to transact in bed too, he reads every newspaper quite through, dozes three or four hours, gets up in time for dinner, and goes to bed between ten and eleven. He sleeps very ill, and rings his bell forty times in the night; if he wants to know the hour, though a watch hangs close to him, he will have his *valet de chambre* down rather than turn his head to look at it. The same thing if he wants a glass of water; he won't stretch out his hand to get it.

By the end of his life, what with hot rooms and cherry brandy, he was too fat and too ashamed of his stomach to go out, was partly blind and was afflicted with delusions. They were the delusions of what h would have liked to have been and done. Grevill was not acute enough to see that they were patheti The King had convinced himself that he had com manded a division at Waterloo and that he ha ridden a winning race at Goodwood, to prove h 'bottom'.

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SAMUEL ROGERS

Most pathetic of all—and a proof of the profound love for his father which had wrecked his life by some unconscious tangle—he had convinced himself that he and George III had been models for child and parent. In point of fact, the insane King had once flown at his throat, and they had hated each other.

One day he was talking of the late King, and asserted that George III had said to himself, 'Of all the men I have ever known you are the one on whom I have the greatest dependence, and you are the most perfect gentleman.' Another day he said, 'that he recollected the old Lord Chesterfield, who once said to him, "Sir, you are the fourth Prince of Wales I have known, and I must give your Royal Highness one piece of advice: stick to your father; as long as you adhere to your father you will be a great and happy man, but if you separate yourself from him you will be nothing and an unhappy one;" and, by God (added the King), I never forgot that advice, and acted upon it all my life.' 'We all,' said the Duke, 'looked at one another with astonishment.'

When he was finally dead, with the dreadful cry of 'This is death! Oh God, they have deceived me!' there were found in his wardrobe all the coats, boots and pantaloons of fifty years. He had remembered them all, and could call for any one of them at any moment. There were five hundred pocket books, containing forgotten sums of money amounting to

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William IV lay almost outside the scope of the Age
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remarkably well, gay, and full of sport and mischief, yet clever withall as well as comical.

'Well, this is the first day I have ever dined with the King at St. James's on his birthday. Pray, have you all drunk his Majesty's health?'

'No, your Roy'l Highness: your Roy'l Highness might make dem do dat,' said Mrs. Schwellenberg.

'Oh, by —— will I! Here you (to the footman); bring champagne! I'll drink the King's health again, if I die for it! Yet, I have done pretty well already: so has the King. I promise you! I believe his Majesty was never taken such good care of before. We have kept his spirits up, I promise you; we have enabled him to go through his fatigues; and I should have done more still, but for the ball and Mary — I have promised to dance with Mary!'

Princess Mary made her first appearance at Court today. . . .

Champagne being now brought for the Duke, he ordered it all round. When it came to me I whispered to Westerhaults to carry it on: the Duke slapped his hand violently on the table and called out: 'Oh, by ——, you shall drink it.'

There was no resisting this. We all stood up, and the Duke sonorously gave the Royal toast.

'And now,' cried he, making us all sit down again, 'where are all my rascals of servants? I shan't be in time for the ball; besides, I've got a deuced tailor waiting to fix on my epaulette! Here, you, go and see for my servants! d'ye hear? Scamper off!'

Off ran William.

'Come, let's have the King's health again. De Luc, drink it. Here, champagne to de Luc!'

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They all stood up and drank the Queen's health.

'Here are three of us,' cried the Duke, 'all belonging to the Queen: the Queen's philosopher, the Queen's gentleman usher and the Queen's son; but, thank heaven, I'm nearest!'

'Sir,' cried Mr. Stanhope, a little affronted, 'I am not now the Queen's gentleman usher; I am the Queen's equerry, sir.'

'A glass more of champagne here! What are you all so slow for? Where are all my rascals gone? They've put me in one passion already this morning. Come, a glass of champagne for the Queen's gentleman usher!' laughing heartily.

'No, sir,' repeated Mr. Stanhope; 'I am equerry now, sir.'

'And another glass for the Queen's philosopher!'

Neither gentleman objected; but Mrs. Schwellenberg, who had sat laughing and happy all this time, now grew alarmed, and said: 'Your Royal Highness, I am afraid for the ball!'

'Hold your potato-jaw, my dear,' cried the Duke, patting her; but, recollecting himself, he took her hand and pretty abruptly kissed it, and then, flinging it hastily away, laughed aloud, and called out: 'There! that will make amends for anything, so now I may say what I will. So here! a glass of champagne for the Queen's philosopher and the Queen's gentleman usher! Hang me if it will not do them a monstrous deal of good!'

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'A bumper,' cried the Duke, 'to the Queen's gentleman usher.'

They all stood up and drank the Queen's health.

'Here are three of us,' cried the Duke, 'all belonging to the Queen: the Queen's philosopher, the Queen's gentleman usher and the Queen's son; but, thank heaven, I'm nearest!'

'Sir,' cried Mr. Stanhope, a little affronted, 'I am not now the Queen's gentleman usher; I am the Queen's equerry, sir.'

'A glass more of champagne here! What are you all so slow for? Where are all my rascals gone? They've put me in one passion already this morning. Come, a glass of champagne for the Queen's gentleman usher!' laughing heartily.

'No, sir,' repeated Mr. Stanhope; 'I am equerry now, sir.'

'And another glass for the Queen's philosopher!'

Neither gentleman objected; but Mrs. Schwellenberg, who had sat laughing and happy all this time, now grew alarmed, and said: 'Your Royal Highness, I am afraid for the ball!'

'Hold your potato-jaw, my dear,' cried the Duke, patting her; but, recollecting himself, he took her hand and pretty abruptly kissed it, and then, flinging it hastily away, laughed aloud, and called out: 'There! that will make amends for anything, so now I may say what I will. So here! a glass of champagne for the Queen's philosopher and the Queen's gentleman usher! Hang me if it will not do them a monstrous deal of good!'

Here, champagne! what are you all about? Why you give champagne to poor Stanhope?'

Stanhope, with great pleasure, complied, and the e again accompanied him.

me hither, do you hear?' cried the Duke to the ants, and, on the approach, slow and submissive, Mrs. Stainforth's man, he hit him a violent slap on back, calling out: 'Hang you! Why don't you see my rascals?'

way flew the man, and then he called out to Wester- ults: 'Hark 'ee! Bring another glass of champagne r Mr. de Luc!'

Mr. de Luc knows these Royal youths too well to ven- ure at so vain an experiment as disputing with them o he only shrugged his shoulders and drank the wine The Duke did the same.

'And now, poor Stanhope;' cried the Duke; 'give another glass to poor Stanhope, d'ye hear?'

'Is not your Highness afraid' cried Stanhope, dis- playing the full circle of his borrowed teeth, 'I shall be apt to be rather up in the world, as the folks say, if I tope on at this rate?'

'Not at all! You can't get drunk in a better cause. I'd get drunk myself if it was not for the ball. Here, cham- pagne! Another glass for the philosopher! I keep sober for Mary.'

'Oh, your Royal Highness!' cried Mr. de Luc, gaining courage as he drank, 'you will make me quite droll of it if you make me go on — quite droll!'

'So much the better! so much the better! it will do you a monstrous deal of good. Here, another glass o champagne for the Queen's philosopher!'

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There has been a great fracas at Kensington: one of the Mesdames [the King's daughters] pulled the chair from under the Countess Deloraine [the King's favourite] at cards, who, being provoked that her Monarch was diverted with her disgrace, with the malice of a hobby-horse, gave him just such another fall. But alas! the Monarch, like Louis XIV., is mortal in the part that touched the ground, and was so hurt and so angry, that the Countess is disgraced, and her German rival remains in the sole and quiet possession of her royal master's favour.

At the same time, for all the absurdity, it was notable that Walpole's sovereigns were inclined to conform to the standard of culture enjoyed by their aristocracy. George I was said to have claimed that he was proud to rule in two countries which could boast of Leibnitz and Newton; George II wrote the finest love-letters Lord Hervey had ever seen; George III was a collector of books and a musician who considered that unmusical people were dumb; and George IV was a linguist, singer, art-patron and dilettante, who, so Wraxall said, was 'competent to peruse the Greek, as well as the Roman poets and historians, in their own language'. William, however, 'Silly Billy', had been cheated of the family culture by his naval education. He, according to Beau Brummell, was 'only fit to walk about on a quarter-deck and cry "Luff"!'

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CHAPTER FOUR

Bottom

IN the eighteenth century, but particularly under the Regency, a gentleman was expected to have 'bottom'. It was a word of composite meaning, which implied stability, and also what the twentieth century calls 'guts'. It meant being able to keep one's head in emergencies, and, in a financial sense, that one was backed by capital, instead of being an adventurer. Bottom, in fact, was synonymous with courage, coolness and solidity. The metaphor was derived from ships.

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his should excite ridicule, when he did not intend it; he therefore resolved to assume and exercise despotick power, glanced sternly around, and called out, in a strong tone, 'Where's the merriment?' Then collecting himself, and looking aweful, to make us feel how he could impose restraint, and as it were searching his mind for a still more ludicrous word, he slowly pronounced, 'I say the *woman* was *fundamentally* sensible;' as if he had said, hear this now, and laugh if you dare. We all sat composed as at a funeral.

We are apt to forget how necessary the stoic and solid qualities must have been, in an age before anaesthetics and modern medicine. Childbirth had no palliatives then, and operations were performed either in full consciousness, or else with the patient inebriated, or else, it has been said, after stunning the sufferer with a mallet. 'Imagining that the dropsical collection of water which oppressed him might be drawn off by making incisions in his body', Dr. Johnson took matters into his own hands and 'with his usual resolute defiance of pain, cut deep when he thought that his surgeon had done it too tenderly'. 'Every day once at least', said Lord Hervey in describing Queen Caroline's fatal operation for a rupture, 'and sometimes oftener, from the first of her being under the surgeons' hands, they were forced, or thought themselves so, to make some new incision; and before every operation of this kind which she underwent, she always used to ask the King if he approved what the surgeons proposed to do; and when he said they had told him it was necessary, and that he hoped she would consent to anything they thought so, she always submitted immediately, and suffered them

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Not only were the physical facts of life formidable, but also the spiritual ones. Any husband had to be prepared to see his wife or children carried off, by smallpox before Dr. Jenner and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had made inoculation fashionable, or by childbirth, or by one of the peculiar diseases which then went by different names. The slaughter of bereavement, which kills the previous life of the survivor, was in wait for them. Five of Crabbe's seven children died: Gibbon was the sole survivor of seven siblings: four of Sterne's six brothers died: Gray was the only one who lived, from a family of twelve. Conditions had been even worse in earlier times. Defoe, writing in 1722, mentioned an Essex farmer then living with his five-and-twentieth wife, with a son of 35 who had already had fourteen.

The reason, as a merry fellow told me, who said he had had about a dozen and a half of wives (tho' I found afterwards he fibb'd a little) was this; that they being bred in the marshes themselves, and season'd to the place, did pretty well with it; but that they always went up into the hilly country, or to speak their own language into the uplands for a wife: that when they took the young lasses out of the wholesome and fresh air, they were healthy, fresh and clear, and well; but

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It was related of Dr. Parr that:

As the best boys were generally in requisition at lesson, of course they came under more frequent rebuke of the rod: but for the most part we all had our share; when a question was not answered in the first instance, it was put to every boy with 'you', 'you', 'you', &c., and the result too often was, *'I'll flog you all'*: this was immediately done, and it was my business, as the last in the form, to assist in the operation; and then I came to the slaughter last, like Ulysses, but ere this the hand of the executioner was wearied, or his displeasure abated . . . Some years ago, when I asked him whether he did not feel some compunction for having given us so much torture, he replied in a loud and good-natured tone, *'You rogue, it would be the worse for you, if I had you now.'*

Yet Samuel Parr considered himself, and was widely considered, a liberal-minded person. He would never flog a boy twice at the same lesson.

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Ye sons of Westminster who still retain
Your antient dread of Busby's awful reign,
Forget at length your fears — your panic end —
The monarch of the place is now a Freind.

Johnson himself was an ardent advocate of the birch, and said that he owed his knowledge of Latin to the plentiful flogging of his master, Mr. Hunter. 'My master whipt me very well. Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing.' He told Mr. Langton that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, 'And this I do to save you from the gallows.' 'Children,' said the Doctor, 'being not reasonable, can only be governed by fear', and he proceeded to extenuate the activities of a schoolmaster who was being prosecuted for cruelty by explaining that 'no scholar has gone from him either blind or lame'. In the previous century, Nathaniel Eaton (d. 1674), the drunken master of Harvard College in America, had awarded his pupils thirty stripes at a time, and had beaten his usher for two hours with a 'walnut-tree plant big enough to have killed a horse'. Dr. Keate, the head master of Eton (1773-1852), flogged more than eighty boys on one day, and only regretted that he had not flogged more. A flogging was applied to the buttocks with a birch, after the sufferer had placed himself on a block, or been 'horsed' on another boy's back, and, if this operation may have taken three minutes, Dr. Keate must have been in action for four hours. 'He was', said King-

lake, 'little more, if more at all, than five feet in height, and was not very great in girth, but in this space was concentrated the pluck of ten battalions. He had a really noble voice, and this he could moderate with great skill, but he had also the power of quacking like an angry duck.' Dryden had remembered the birch of one of these worthies 'to his dying day' — but had sent his two eldest sons to the same school — and it was said that another of them, who was accustomed to flagellate boys every morning according to a list provided, contrived to muddle his lists and whipped the confirmation class before the error was corrected. The poet Southey was expelled from Westminster in 1792, for writing against the beatings in the school magazine, and Lawrence, the great Governor-General of India, who went to school in 1811, said bitterly: 'I was flogged once every day of my life at school except one, and then I was flogged twice.'

It would be a mistake to waste too much sympathy on the average schoolboy, however. So effective was the encouragement of Bottom that full-sized rebellions broke out in more than one Public School, so serious that they had to be quelled by the military. The rebellion at Harrow, about Parr's claims to be head master, lasted for three weeks. The boys themselves entered into the spirit of the thing, and readers of *Tom Jones* or Lamb's essay on Christ's Hospital, or of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, or of the various lives of the poet Shelley, will know enough about flogging and roasting and boxing-to-death-behind-the-chapel.

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> Your antient dread of Busby's awful reign,
> Forget at length your fears — your panic end —
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Another way of learning to meet the undauntable ills of life was by pugilism. The snob Byron was proud to be seen in the company of a great boxer, Gentleman Jackson, his 'old friend and corporeal pastor and master' who had taught him the noble art. The respect paid to this fighter was sufficient to astonish Moore. Jackson's claims to fame were that he could lift 10¾ hundredweight, could sign his name with an eighty-four pound weight tied to his little finger, and that he had been employed as a bodyguard at the coronation of Florizel, with eighteen other prizefighters dressed as pages. He had been the champion heavyweight of England for eight years, and had fought the famous battles with Mendoza, Fewterel and George the Brewer. In short, he was worshipped for his Bottom; as well he might be. He had fallen during hi fight with the Brewer in 1789, dislocating his ankl and breaking a bone in his leg, but had offered t finish the contest 'tied to a chair'. He lived to b seventy-seven.

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Another facet of Bottom was the capacity to bet. 'Our ancestors were men of their hands,' said G. O. Trevelyan, 'who regarded a duel as the natural issue of a quarrel, and a bet as the most authoritative solution of an argument.' They did not find it convenient 'to spend twenty minutes in confuting a man who had so little faith in his own view that he would not back it with twenty guineas'. The wager was, according to this historian, a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*, or a cutting of the Gordian knot in controversy. When one man claimed that the world was round, and the other that it was flat, they might save themselves many hours of useless debate by backing their opinions financially, and by leaving it to the concrete decision. This was not, however, the spiritual basis of hazard and loo. In games of chance, at which, for instance, Charles James Fox lost one hundred and forty thousand of their pounds in three years, the young men of the period sought to harden their courage. It was Spartan to take one's fortune in one's hands and to risk it on the turn of pitch and toss. When they lost, they paid like men of honour, and it was then their business to start again at their beginnings, and never to breathe a word about their loss. It was

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Fox-hunting was another sphere for courage. George III insisted that his children should be

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rageous on horseback, and believed that poor rizel was a coward — which he was not, for he rned out to be dauntless about surgical operations.

f Lord North [wrote Rose in his diary], his Majesty as beginning to speak in very favourable terms, when e were interrupted by the Princess Amelia, who with he other Princesses was riding behind us, getting a most unfortunate fall. The horse, on cantering down an inconsiderable hill, came on his head, and threw her Royal Highness flat on her face. She rose without any appearance of being at all hurt, but evidently a good deal shaken, and notwithstanding an earnest wish to avoid occasioning the slightest alarm, was herself not desirous of getting on horseback again. But the King insisted that she should, if at all hurt, get into one of the carriages, and return to Cuffnells to be bled, or otherwise mount another horse, and ride on. She chose the latter, and rode to Southampton, where she lost some blood unknown to the King. I hazarded an advice, that no one else would do, for her Royal Highness's return, which was certainly not well received, and provoked a quickness from his Majesty that I experienced in no other instance. He observed that he could not bear that any of his family should want courage; to which I replied I hoped his Majest would excuse me if I said I thought a proper attention to prevent the ill effects of an accident that *had* hap pened, were no symptom of a want of courage. H then said with some warmth — 'Perhaps it may be s but I thank Heaven there is but one of my childr who wants courage; and I will not name H *because he is to succeed me*.'

Originally consisting in the patient pursuit of a on steady horses assisted by contemplative sagacious dogs, the hunt was accelerated in the e

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Drink was also taken as a form of endurance. Barrington gives an example of ten men who locked themselves in a room with a hogshead of claret and contrived to finish it, together with unspecified amounts of cherry brandy, in a week.

> After drinking two-and-twenty bumpers [wrote Hickey], in glasses of considerable magnitude, the *considerate* President said, everyone might then fill according to his own discretion, and so *discreet* were all of the company that we continued to follow the Colonel's example of drinking nothing short of bumpers until two o'clock in the morning, at which hour each person staggered to his carriage or his palankeen, and was conveyed to town. The next day I was incapable of leaving my bed, from an excruciating headache, which I did not get rid of for eight-and-forty hours.

Two friends of Sir Philip Francis drank ten bottles of champagne and burgundy between them, at a sitting, without thinking it exceptional. 'I have drunk three bottles of port without being the worse for it,' said Dr. Johnson. 'University College has witnessed this.' John Mytton took from four to six bottles a day,

courageous on horseback, and believed that poor Florizel was a coward — which he was not, for he turned out to be dauntless about surgical operations.

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JOHN, LORD HERVEY (SPORUS)


HORACE WALPOLE


SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

CHAPTER FIVE

Men, Women and Herveys

THERE was even a small scandal about Horace Walpole himself. It is not mentioned in the Everyman edition of his letters, and Dobson glides over it in a couple of pages, so perhaps it is worth repeating.

He was technically the fourth son of the Prime Minister, in those great days when Ministers controlled places. He was early presented to three fat sinecures which brought him about £2200 a year, a sum which would be much greater in modern money. He had nothing to do during all his life, except to divert himself or to amuse his friends. He never married. He wrote the letters, and also the first thriller in the English language; he revived the national interest in Gothic architecture, built the phantasy of Strawberry Hill, the 'little Ark with pinnacles' and kept on cramming it with knick-knacks till he died; he had a printing-press of his own, an excellent one; he thrived on gossip, and on playing at loo or at hazard with a duchess or two; when he died, he was eighty, full of years, gout and honours, for he had succeeded his nephew as the fourth Earl of Orford. The Toynbee edition of sixteen volumes contains 3061 long letters, of which the following is one of the shortest samples, written to a friend in Jersey:

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We have already met the most famous of them, he Duchess of Marlborough's 'Lady Fanny', Pope's Sporus' —John, Lord Hervey.

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In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
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Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
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Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad!
Half froth half venom spits himself abroad,
In pun or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady and now struts a lord.
Eve's tempter thus the rabbins have expressed.
A cherub's face — a reptile all the rest!
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
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Yes, but Sporus was the father of eight children. The exact story of Lord Hailes about the ass's milk, which Hervey took because he was a sick man, was that he confined himself to a diet of 'a small quantity of asses' milk and a flour biscuit . . . Once a week, he indulged himself with eating an apple; he used emetics daily'. He painted his face with rouge in consequence of this terrible discipline — for the epilepsy from which he believed himself to suffer — 'to soften his ghastly appearance'. Far from tripping it as a lady, he had fought a memorable duel with Pulteney, in which both combatants were wounded.

It was not the only duel in which the clan of Hervey became involved, through the stupidity of

their opponents in expecting them to be effeminate. Another instance was George, the eldest son of Sporus, whose imbroglio with the bumpkin Lord Cobham was recorded by Walpole.

About ten days ago, at the new Lady Cobham's assembly, Lord Hervey was leaning over a chair talking to some women, and holding his hat in his hand. Lord Cobham came up and spit in it — yes, spit in it! — and then, with a loud laugh, turned to Nugent, and said, 'Pay me my wager.' In short, he had laid a guinea that he committed this absurd brutality, and that it was not resented. Lord Hervey, with great temper and sensibility, asked if he had any further occasion for his hat? — 'Oh! I see you are angry!' — 'Not very well pleased.' Lord Cobham took the fatal hat, and wiped it, made a thousand apologies, and wanted to pass it off for a joke. Next morning he rose with the sun, and went to visit Lord Hervey; so did Nugent; he would not see them, but wrote to the Spitter (or, as he is now called, Lord Gob'em), to say, that he had affronted him very grossly before company, but having involved Nugent in it, he desired to know to which he was to address himself for satisfaction. Lord Cobham wrote him a most submissive answer, and begged pardon both in his own and Nugent's name. Here it rested for a few days; till getting wind, Lord Hervey wrote again to insist on an explicit apology under Lord Cobham's own hand, with a rehearsal of the excuses that had been made to him. This too was complied with, and the *fair conqueror* shews all the letters.

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And then there was his own description of the Norfolk Walpoles, to whom he believed himself to belong:

I shudder when I see them brandish their knives in act to carve, and look on them as savages that devour one another. I should not stare at all more than I do, if yonder Alderman at the lower end of the table was to stick his fork into his neighbour's jolly cheek, and cut a brave slice of brown and fat. Why, I'll swear I see no difference between a country gentleman and a sirloin; whenever the first laughs, or the latter is cut, there run out just the same streams of gravy!'

Sir Robert, the official father, was such a person. He was startlingly fat — 'avec ce gros corps' said the Queen, 'ces jambes enflées, et ce vilain ventre' — vulgar in his jokes — he always talked bawdry at table, according to Boswell, so that everybody could join in — a good farmer-like statesman and foxhunter, who opened his gamekeepers' letters first and who might have made an equal fortune as a cattle-dealer. His motto was: *Quieta non movere*: Leave well alone — just the motto for a husband whose wife may have been unfaithful.

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Catherine Shorter, Sir Robert Walpole's first wife, had five children. Four of them were born in a sequence after the marriage; the fifth, Horace, was born eleven years later, at a time when she was known to be on bad terms with Sir Robert, and known to be on romantic terms with Carr, Lord Hervey, an elder half-brother of Pope's Sporus. Carr himself died young and unmarried, when Horace was six, so we lack his version of the story.

On reviewing these points, it may seem possible that Horry, as he was called by his familiars (behind his back), was a Hervey rather than a Walpole. He did the Hervey things. He built Strawberry just as the Earl-bishop built Downhill. He enjoyed the arts of literature and history like Sporus, arts which seemed contemptible to the Norfolk sirloins of Sir Robert's race. He was effeminate. He ran on the tips of his toes, they said, like a peewit. He was devoted to gossip, 'at the ear of Eve', like Queen Caroline's pet. Perhaps the best account of him was by Laetitia Matilda Hawkins:

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There is a point which may be of interest to the biologist, if the irregular parentage should be assumed. It may be of interest that the hereditary tendencies of separate people should have expressed themselves in an identical way, each without the knowledge of the other. For both Hervey and Walpole wrote memoirs of the court, without showing them to each other, and these memoirs were inseparable in tone and content.

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Particularly there was Sporus, the younger brother of Horace's putative father, Carr — 'whose early death', as Pope said of the latter, 'deprived the family of as much wit and honour as he left behind in any part of it'. On the other hand there was the Rowlandson figure of the Prime Minister, so gross that he could hardly stand and who had to be accommodated with a chair when talking to the Queen — then a rare distinction — good natured, able at figures — which Horace never could understand — and described by Lord Chesterfield as 'inelegant in his manners . . . loose in his morals . . . with a strong, coarse wit, which he was too free of for a man in his station, as it is always inconsistent with dignity'. Between them stood Horace, 'the most eccentric', according to the pettish Macaulay, 'the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of mortals — his mind a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations — his features covered with mask within mask, which, when the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed, you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man'. It is interesting to compare Macaulay on Walpol with Pope on Hervey.

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Such is the evidence about paternity, for what it is worth: but the importance of the doyen of the Age of Scandal lay in his life, not in his birth. It was an enviable life, and he himself had possessed the sense, as well as the opportunity, to make it so.

Horace Walpole used to get up late. He would breakfast with the dogs and squirrel, then dress himself and saunter in the gardens of Strawberry, where he would direct the operations of his builders and plasterers, play with Tonton or Patapan, and arrange whatever printing or gilding he happened to have on hand. At twelve o'clock a 'light-bodied chariot' would be at the door, with his coachman and valet, and he would drive to London before dinner, to see if there was any news upon the wing. Returned to Strawberry, he would find his dinner waiting at the unfashionable hour of four o'clock. 'I am', he wrote in 1789, 'so antiquated as still to dine at four, though frequently prevented, as many are so good as to call

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Particularly there was Sporus, the younger brother of Horace's putative father, Carr — 'whose early death', as Pope said of the latter, 'deprived the family of as much wit and honour as he left behind in any part of it'. On the other hand there was the Rowlandson figure of the Prime Minister, so gross that he could hardly stand and who had to be accommodated with a chair when talking to the Queen — then a rare distinction — good natured, able at figures — which Horace never could understand — and described by Lord Chesterfield as 'inelegant in his manners . . . loose in his morals . . . with a strong, coarse wit, which he was too free of for a man in his station, as it is always inconsistent with dignity'. Between them stood Horace, 'the most eccentric', according to the pettish Macaulay, 'the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of mortals — his mind a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations — his features covered with mask within mask, which, when the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man' It is interesting to compare Macaulay on Walpol with Pope on Hervey.

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on me at that hour, because it is too soon for them to go home and dress so early in the morning.' After dinner, or perhaps before it, he might have put on his 'dress of ceremony', which might now be called his evening dress. The difference between the two costumes is illustrated by the most delightful of his vulgar stories.

You will be diverted with what happened to Mr Meynell lately. He was engaged to dine at a formal old lady's, but stayed so late hunting that he had not time to dress, but went as he was, with forty apologies. The matron very affected, and meaning to say something very civil, cried, 'Oh! Sir, I assure you I can see the gentleman through a pair of buckskin breeches as well as if he were in silk or satin.'

Once Horry was in the full fig, he would set out for his evening call, some visit to a Birthday or to a Drawing-room, or perhaps to play at hazard in the 'family' of one of the dowager princesses. When he had returned from this, or if he had stayed at home for the night, he would sit down to write at ten o'clock, taking several cups of coffee while he worked. There, in the Blue Room or the Library, he would 'write letters of news to Mann or Montagu, acknowledg cards of invitation from peers or peeresses, give lif to the antiquarian notes of Vertue the engraver, pas Fairthornes and Hollars into his volumes of Engli heads, annotate a favourite author, and retire to r about two in the morning'.

The villa of Strawberry Hill, which he created, been subjected to a certain amount of ill-natured f and, it might be added, to ill-informed fun, by

[illegible] of architects. They say that it was not true Gothic, but bastard and degenerate. Walpole was one of the first people who paid attention to 'Gothick' architecture at all; it was not to be expected that he would understand its principles from the start. Nor did he intend the house to be taken seriously. It was a fantasy, half a joke: a fairy story in lath and plaster which he called into being like the décor of a Russian ballet: and he himself was the first to be aware of its insolemnity. When the famous printing press had given birth to a copy of polite verses for the visiting nobility, he would make 'a private signal', and French horns and clarinets would accompany the compliment from the lawn. French visitors complained that it was not 'digne de la solidité anglaise'. He was always threatening to wrap it up, it was so small, and to enclose it in the letter he was writing. 'It was built', he said, 'to please my own taste and in some degree to realize my own visions.' In the end he wrote pathetically of his 'poor little Strawberry', since so prophetically: 'My buildings are paper, like my writings, and both will be blown away in ten years after I am dead.'

'We know every room in Strawberry Hill,' said Cunningham in 1858, after all the ornaments had been auctioned and when nothing remained except the descriptions in the letters or the catalogue, 'and every miniature and full-length portrait in the Tribune and Gallery. We are admitted to the Holbein chamber and the Beauclerk closet, and as we wander in print over the stripped rooms and now newly furnished walls, we can pass a night in his favourite Blue Room, restore the Roman Eagle, replace the bust of Vespasian and the armour of Francis I; bring back from Knowsley

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the blue and white china bowl, commemorated in the Odes of Gray, and call up Kirgate, the printer, carrying a proof of the "Anecdotes of Painting" to Conway's "Elzevir Horace" in the Gothic Library. As we become better acquainted with his letters, we can summon before us the skilful antiquary and virtuoso midwife, and see Strawberry in lilac-tide — that period of the year in which its owner thought Strawberry in perfection.'

CHAPTER SIX

Sporus

OHN, LORD HERVEY, was born in 1696, long before the Age of Scandal.

He belonged to a singular family, and had the ingular fate to become the hero of the most vitupera- ive verses in the English language. It was not difficult o be an enemy of Pope's. Hervey's father was a harming person, who, in spite of political differences, remained on loving terms with his son, only complaining bitterly about the young man's addiction to tea — 'that detestable and poisonous plant, which had once brought him to death's door, and if persisted in would carry him through it'. His wife, Mary Lepell, a bold and noted belle who had been the toast of the town, and who had been considered by the Duchess of Marlborough to be 'extreme forward and pert', loved him faithfully, and bore him eight children. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a friend till death. The Queen admitted him to her bed-chamber, creating a precedent in this, calling him her 'child' and saying: 'It is well I am so old, or I should be talked of for this creature.' Princess Caroline loved him vainly. The King trusted him; and so did Sir Robert Walpole, the shrewdest of men.

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He adhered until he was dismissed — for the Queen had died in 1737 and thus removed his *raison d'être* — then went into opposition, began to fail himself, and died at the age of forty-six in 1743.

As politicians went, this was a history of fidelity. Hervey was not a place-hunter, but a neighbouring friend who had become attracted to the royal family in the gossiping way. It was for this that the Queen had valued him. He had amused her, and he had known that he did so, and he had been pleased that this should be. He had been sorry for the woman, in her strange predicament of royalty, and he had tried to ease its burden.

His own burdens had not been light. The story of Lord Hailes, that he lived on one biscuit a day, with a little ass's milk and an apple a week, taking emetics daily, was exaggerated or confined to a brief interlude. He himself wrote to his doctor in 1732:

To let you know that I continue one of your most pious votaries, and to tell you the method I am in. In the first place, I never take wine nor malt drink, or any liquid but water and milk-tea; in the next, I eat no meat but the whitest, youngest, and tenderest, nine times in ten nothing but chicken, and never more than the quantity of a small one at a meal. I seldom eat any supper, but if any, nothing absolutely but bread and

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head giddy, and my appetite gone. I have not bragged
of the persecutions I suffer in this cause; but the attack
made on me by ignorance, impertinence, and gluttony
are innumerable and incredible.

'Beef?' he was supposed to have said once, possibly under one of these attacks by ignorant gluttons. 'Oh, no! Faugh! Don't you know I never eat beef, nor *horse*, nor any of those things?'

He seems to have thought of his disease as epilepsy, though it might have been an unbalanced diet and the green tea of which his father complained, or perhaps one of the toxic conditions so common in his century. He wrote to Stephen Fox:

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Whatever it was, the disorder was real, as his early death showed. Pope's wicked jeers about the ass's milk, or about Narcissus who 'look'd a white lily sunk beneath a shower'; the Duchess of Marlborough's sneers from the same poet about 'Lady Fanny'; even Horry's squibs at the 'coffin face' and the common titter raised about the rouge with which he tried to colour the lily, must seem distressing against these facts. He had a painted face, said the implacable Duchess, and not a tooth in his head. She did not mention, nor perceive, the courage with which he had faced these disabilities, nor the sensitiveness with which he had tried to hide them.

When he was dying, he wrote to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu:

I have been confined these three weeks with a fever, which is a sort of annual tax my detestable constitution pays to our detestable climate at the return of every spring; it is now much abated, though not quite gone off . . . Adieu! my head is still so weak that it turns

water; two days in the week I eat no flesh; my breakfast is dry biscuit not sweet, and green tea; I have left off butter as bilious; I eat no salt, nor any sauce but bread sauce. I take a Scotch pill once a week, and thirty grains of Indian root when my stomach is loaded, my head giddy, and my appetite gone. I have not bragged of the persecutions I suffer in this cause; but the attacks made on me by ignorance, impertinence, and gluttony are innumerable and incredible.

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ange posture; and I believe you know as much of
em where you are, and what we would be at, as any
nister in the cabinet. I am sure I know no more
an if I had been born an idiot.

Finally, in his last letter, of which the handwriting
quavered as it went, he distilled the pessimism of
dying Roman:

> The last stages of an infirm life are filthy roads, and like all other roads I find the farther one goes from the capital the more tedious the miles grow and the more rough and disagreeable the way. I know of no turnpikes to mend them; medicine pretends to be such, but doctors who have the management of it, like the commissioners for most other turnpikes, seldom execute what they undertake: they only put the toll of the poor cheated passenger in their pockets, and leave every jolt at least as bad as they found it, if not worse. 'May all your ways (as Solomon says of wisdom) be ways of pleasantness, and all your paths peace;' and when your dissolution must come, may it be like that of your lucky workman. Adieu!

The 'lucky workman' had died young and suddenly,
by falling from a builder's scaffold.

'But let me flap', Pope had said, 'this bug wit
gilded wings, this painted child of dirt . . .' Herve
had been a butterfly, as Pope perceived, and as Be
Brummell was later to seek to be. But he had been
butterfly of cynicism and reservation. Dismissed fr
the court which he had always served, and writing
memoirs as a dying man, he retained an unemoti
disdain. He looked, as he wrote, at Caroline

Queen who had liked him, as a lepidopterist might look at the moth which he was setting. It was the scientific, the noble attitude. Even to the Queen's daughter, the Princess Caroline, who had died in love with him, he accorded only the politeness of silence. And to Pope's odious personalities about Sporus, he had replied, with the aid of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu:

If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue,
Or give thy manifold deserts their due:
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
Unwhip't, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
But thou'rt too mean, they see, and they despise.

Lord Hervey was one of those people about whom it was difficult to be moderate. If hated, as he was by Pope, he was bound to be hated excessively. If loved, a *hysterica passio* rises against his detractors. He was, in literature, as dispassionate as Pavlov with his unfortunate dog. He had the Roman fashion, which refused to pity or to distort. At the same time, perhaps for relief from these altitudes, he was a lap-dog who amused himself with tattle. It was, in the main, the Spartan attitude. What was the value of life? He was ill and rich and growing old: the *Dictionary of National Biography* might come to talk of his 'continued infidelities': but he had one criterion unblemished, the devotion to truth so far as he was able to perceive it, and, after that, he was content to amuse a dilettante Queen, with the butterfly gossip of an unbelieving age.

round with what I have written. I will write again when I grow stronger. The public affairs are in a strange posture; and I believe you know as much of them where you are, and what we would be at, as any minister in the cabinet. I am sure I know no more than if I had been born an idiot.

Finally, in his last letter, of which the handwriting quavered as it went, he distilled the pessimism of a dying Roman:

The last stages of an infirm life are filthy roads, and like all other roads I find the farther one goes from the capital the more tedious the miles grow and the more rough and disagreeable the way. I know of no turnpikes to mend them; medicine pretends to be such, but doctors who have the management of it, like the commissioners for most other turnpikes, seldom execute what they undertake: they only put the toll of the poor cheated passenger in their pockets, and leave every jolt at least as bad as they found it, if not worse. 'May all your ways (as Solomon says of wisdom) be ways of pleasantness, and all your paths peace;' and when your dissolution must come, may it be like that of your lucky workman. Adieu!

The 'lucky workman' had died young and suddenly, by falling from a builder's scaffold.

'But let me flap', Pope had said, 'this bug with gilded wings, this painted child of dirt . . .' Hervey had been a butterfly, as Pope perceived, and as Beau Brummell was later to seek to be. But he had been a butterfly of cynicism and reservation. Dismissed from the court which he had always served, and writing his memoirs as a dying man, he retained an unemotional disdain. He looked, as he wrote, at Caroline the

Queen who had liked him, as a lepidopterist might look at the moth which he was setting. It was the scientific, the noble attitude. Even to the Queen's daughter, the Princess Caroline, who had died in love with him, he accorded only the politeness of silence. And to Pope's odious personalities about Sporus, he had replied, with the aid of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu:

If none with vengeance yet thy crimes pursue,
Or give thy manifold deserts their due:
If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
Unwhip't, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
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CHAPTER SEVEN

The Mob

THE elegance of the sedan chair, however, ought not to lead us into overlooking the grimy faces of those who often peered through its glasses, or spattered it with mud in a riot, or died on foreign battlefields to preserve the comforts of its patrician owner. It is an astonishing fact that the dilettante and romantic period of Horace Walpole should have also been the period which brought England to the temporary leadership of the world, and that the generations which bred the owner of Strawberry should also have been breeding the victors of Trafalgar and Waterloo. Walpole was within sound of Blen-

King of France, by his stewards ....
do.
King of Spain ....
Many thousands, ditto.
Prince Ferdinand, a private gentleman.............
Some thousands.
Czarina...
Only her own husband.

Total Half Europe.

The debts of the species were paid by the inarticulate plebs, and their snail's-eye view of England's glory was largely without historians. One witness survived, however, in the Orrery Papers, a yeoman of cavalry who wrote home to his village, to say that he was safe, when George II had done with flourishing his sword at Dettingen — to the amusement of Frederick the Great and to the edification of courtly annalists.

To Mr. Thos. Stilman. In Froom in Somersetshir in England. Thus:
Dear Brother, — I send you thes Lins to Let you know that i am in good helth and now i can with plether send you the happy nus of ouer Suckses in the Batel that hapened the 15 of this Month and now i shal proceed with the perteklers which was as folos thusday in the morning at 5 a Clock the french begun playing thar Cannon upon ouer Baggeg from a batery thay had raisd at the other sid the Main and so continued tel 20 Minuets after 8 and then thay turned thar Cannon upon us and all our rogmonts of hors and Draggouns tel 12 which you may think it strang but i shall tel you the Cos of it thay had got 40 Thousand in a wood Just a gainst ouer right whing in order as soun as we was

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rest of the Army and then we marcht up all the foot in
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Center and all the hors upon the left and his Magisty
in the front of the old Bufs as bold as a liont with his
can in one hand and his Sord in the other. So when
thay cam up to them we all gav three housays and all
the futt gave 3 the mortels chers that euer was known
and the french turned tail and run to the water side in
hops of gitting ouer thar brige but while we cape them
in play the queins men puld doun the brige and a bou
2 thousand of them was fos into the water so that the
Main is be com a Seckent Denuap so then ouer Lift
whing cam into play and ouer regmont pusht in upon
the gandarins which is the french Life gards and a
regmont of Dragguns and the first pus has we mad Mr
Vizard was at my rite hand so we had ouer Sords upo
ouer rist and ouer pistols in ouer hand and before M
Vizard could droy his triger his hors was shot and d
upon the Spot and Vizard's legg laid under one ho
belly i dropt my pistol and i hold out my Sord wi
stif arm and cot the blos and neuer waged tel i s
Viz Leg clear of his hors so he got of clear with on
ost of his bags and Shurts and all the things th
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well the most shocking thing was to hear the cris of the wooned french as we rid over when we prsud them but we could not help it so when the batel was ouer which was about 7 a clock we marcht to a plas to in camp on and then 4 Men of a trop was orderd to goe back to tak up ouer tents and citels and all the rest of ouer camp Mitterils and i was one of them and then my hart was shoked mos of all for mos a mile to gether my hors could not step for ded men and horses we lost 15 hundred Men and some ods beside woonded and the french Lost 9 thousand beside woonded the 26 all the whole army fired 3 times after prars for Joy of Vicktory i was upon the vangard for a fortnight be for the battel and i thought it hard work but no thing is so hard as kiling of Men pray my Dear Brother giue my Deuty to my Dear wife and Children and my love to my Brothers and Sisters and all my relations and all that do ax for me it is my dayly prars to god that i may life to com home and lif in happness with my Dear Wife and Children which is all at present from your most loveing Brother EDWARD STILMAN

i mad what in queery i can and sent Jams numan to all the regmonts that he could go to find out if thar was anny of my tounsmen ded and he could find but one which was Thomas Wilkons his head was shot of by a cannon bal the regmont that Samul pew belong to is 5 Mils from ouers so i got Liberti and rid to him and i found him in good helth i could not stay with him not abofe 5 minuts he givs his Deauty to his wife and his love to all pray send to in gineral Hunywood's regmont near Ashaffingburg or els whar.

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self in the coffin. This for a while staggered my chum's recollection also, but at length he accounted for it, by observing, that the Major had ordered him to lie buried, face downwards, as an additional mark of infamy!

Such was the stuff from which the Thomas Atkins of a later age developed, such the 'article' to which the Iron Duke referred in Brussels, before the battle of Waterloo:

'Do you reckon,' I asked, 'upon any support from the French King's troops at Alost?' — 'Oh!' said he, 'don't mention such fellows! No: I think Blucher and I can do the business.' — Then, seeing a private soldier of one of our infantry regiments enter the park, gaping about at the statues and images: — 'There,' he said, pointing at the soldier, 'it all depends upon that article whether we can do the business or not. Give me enough of it, and I am sure.' CREEVEY

The situation of the naval rating, recruited perhaps by a press-gang and regarded by his captain as a representative of the 'bêtes, badauds and blackguards' which was Lord Auckland's description of the proletariat ('Falstaff's men,' said Captain Moore affectionately in 1803, 'decayed tapsters . . . I am already inclined to love them . . . If they fight, I shall worship them') disciplined with a cat-o'-nine-tails and nourished upon salt pork and grog, paid at the time of the Nore mutiny only one-quarter of the money commanded by a merchant seaman, valued at the same price as one vote in an election, expected since the execution of Admiral Byng to die rather than fail to

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arrived, I chose he should not die under my *immediate* command, and therefore quitted the garrison, desiring an old trusty sensible invalid soldier, for whom I had much good will, to attend the execution and let me know *every particular*, that passed at it. He promised so to do, but not without assuring me, he would not have seen such a *deadly blow*, if I had not desired it. Upon my asking him how the old sergeant behaved? he replied, sir, he went out as bold as a lion; but recollecting, that by saying so, I might conceive him to have gone out with an hardened unbecoming boldness, he recalled those words, and said, he died sir like a MAN: observing that the prisoner was the *only* man present who did not tremble! what said I, did Major Debrisay tremble? yes they all trembled, Major, officers and men. The Major then asked the prisoner whether he acknowledged the justice of his sentence? the prisoner said he did: have you then anything to say previous to its being put into execution? yes: — he had a small favour to ask of his honour, and it was, that his fellow prisoner, whom he had just left in the black hold, for a trifling offence, might be forgiven and released? he was promised a compliance to his request, and then, after refusing to have a cap put over his eyes, but to face his hard fate, he was shot to death, according to his sentence. The body was buried in the warren, a spot to which my old invalid, who was my trusty warrener also, and I often visited. After it had lain there seven years, we two, took an early hour, to dig up his bones, as I was determined to preserve the skull of a man, which possessed better brains, than a majority of his court martial members. Upon turning the lid of the coffin over, I was exceedingly surprised, to find the skeleton, blanched as white as snow, by the salt lands and lying in the most perfect order, of a perfect skeleton but with the back turned upwards! I then observed to the old soldier, that the man had been buried before he was quite dead, and had turned him-

self in the coffin. This for a while staggered my chum's recollection also, but at length he accounted for it, by observing, that the Major had ordered him to lie buried, face downwards, as an additional mark of infamy!

Such was the stuff from which the Thomas Atkins of a later age developed, such the 'article' to which the Iron Duke referred in Brussels, before the battle of Waterloo:

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There is extant, for instance, among the Mitchell MSS. in the British Museum, a letter superscribed, — 'For his Present Mayjesty King George ye third, London,' in which the writer, an English sailor, states that in the month of May 1766, while enjoying himself on shore near Memel, he was kidnapped and enlisted against his will into the Prussian military service. Four times over, he informs the King, he has represented his hard case to 'his Mayjisty King of Prows in Berlien,' but no notice having been taken of his letters, he now, by the advice of a 'verry honorowble ould gentleman, a marchant from Ingland,' ventures to address 'tow o three lines' to his own Sovereign. 'This letter,' th writer concludes, 'i must smugle away in toan inglisl mans hands that none of the Offiscears catsh me wit this letter. iam 28 years of agge and 5 foot aleaven hight, and so no more at prescent, but remain, in pra to the Allmighty for your Mayjesty's long rean, and peace with all men. JAMES RICHARDS

From the revow in camps
in Cenesborough May the 31th 1767.

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of the writing as well as of the spelling, the King nevertheless not only took the trouble to decipher it, but ordered an immediate investigation into the truth of the statements which it contained. 'His majesty,' writes one of the Secretaries of State, General Conway, to the British Ambassador at Berlin, 'had received a letter by the Post from one James Richardson, an English Sailor, who, above a twelvemonth ago was, partly by force and partly by terror, enlisted in the Prussian service. As the King's disposition inclines him to lend an ear to the complaints of the meanest of his subjects, he perused this letter with attention; and finding in it a remarkable air of truth and sincerity, he directed me to transmit it to you, that you may inquire concerning its grounds and foundation. If the poor man's narrative be found conformable to fact, and if he be enlisted otherwise than from his free choice, it is his Majesty's pleasure that you make application in his behalf to the King of Prussia, and recover him his liberty.' The man's story proved to be correct, and accordingly, within six weeks from the date of General Conway's letter, he obtained his discharge. The following is a copy of Richardson's certificate of his release: —

'This is to sertify that I James Richardson hath got my discharge from lallenboun ridgiment on foot, and hath got one dallar to bear my expences on my way, and a pass, to make the best of my way to owld ingland.

Rasslinbourg September 18th 1767.'

So rare and splendid an intervention must have seemed to James Richardson a miracle. It was the poor 'dallar' which they gave him, the enlistment 'by terror' and the necessity to 'smugle' his letter for fear of the officers, which threw more light upon the circumstances of the period than the good King's glorious

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behaviour. As Richardson balanced Stilman, so it would be possible to find a pair for the executed sergeant of Governor Thicknesse in the fate of the unfortunate Byng; for all ranks shared in the rigours of the day.

In 1797, when reefing topsails, a Captain Pigot of the *Hermione* called to the men on the mizen-topsail yard that he would flog the last man down. Two of the poor devils, in their hurry to escape the promised flogging, fell to the quarter deck and were killed. 'Throw the lubbers overboard,' said the captain. 'The master of a slave ship, called the "Zong",' says Lecky, 'finding sickness raging among his negroes, deliberately ordered 132 of them to be flung into the sea.' It scarcely comes as a surprise to find that when Thomas Paine, the author of *The Rights of Man*, had joined a privateer in 1753, her name should have been the *Terrible*, and that her commander should have been Captain Death. Stories even more ghastly are to be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*:

DAVIDSON, WILLIAM (1756?-1795?), privateersman, a native of Scotland, born about 1756, was in 1791 serving as an able seaman on board H.M.S. Niger, then commanded by Sir Richard Keats. Davidson was noted as a comparatively well-educated man of gloomy and silent disposition, but liable to sudden outbursts of temper. While the ship was at Deal he was condemned to be flogged for some such outburst. The punishment caused him excessive agony, and at the fifth stroke he fell into convulsions. The sentence was then remitted, but some time after he struck an officer and was again condemned. While being brought to the gangway he attempted to cut his throat, and this failing, he tried, but also in vain, to throw himse

overboard. His punishment was not proceeded with, but he was ordered into confinement. The whole circumstances of the case led to an inquiry into Davidson's past life, and a rumour was found current in the ship that he possessed a journal giving an account of singular atrocities in which he had been engaged. Davidson's chest was ransacked, the journal was found, and laid before the officers. It narrated that the author on 1 Dec. 1788 had enlisted on board the Saint Dinnan, a Russian privateer, which on 3 Dec. cleared from Leghorn for Messina. He and the other Englishmen on board were discharged from the ship at Trieste on 6 Sept. 1789, with wages and prize money amounting to 230L. per man. During the interval the Saint Dinnan cruised in the Levant, took a large number of Turkish ships, robbed them of what was most valuable, murdered the crews, and burnt the vessels. The privateers also attacked and plundered some of the smaller Grecian islands. On one occasion they had a terrible combat with another pirate, who, after fighting all day, at length yielded. His ship had 378 men on board, 'all of different nations'. The survivors were told by their captors that they would be 'put to the cruelest death that ever could be invented. So we did, for next morning we got whips to the mainstay, and made one leg fast to the whip, and the other fast to a ringbolt in the deck, and so quartered them and hove them overboard'. These and other horrors Davidson narrates in plain methodical order.

The 'Bloody Journal', as it was called, came to have considerable renown with sailors, among whom it was probably current in manuscript versions. A copy was procured for Sir Walter Scott . . . Davidson probably found his position on the Niger exceedingly uncomfortable. He deserted from her at Portsmouth in November 1794, was afterwards pressed on board H.M.S. Royal George, and was accidentally drowned about 1795.

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The political system of the Age of Scandal, a historian has beautifully written, was that of 'aristocracy tempered by rioting'. So aristocratic was it, that 'Pitt was at first the only commoner in the Cabinet of 1783' (Lecky), while Wilberforce refused a peerage because it would exclude his children from intimacy with 'private gentlemen of moderate fortunes, and clergymen, and, still more, mercantile men'.

Admiral Palliser might use the article, but, if the article's mother, the Mob, were displeased by the admiral, his windows would be smashed and himself burnt in effigy. Wellington might point at it in Brussels, like a farmer at a pig, but, when the mother mob found him tardy about the Reform Bill, attempt would be made in Fenchurch Street to drag him fro his horse. There was a give-and-take between th highest and the lowest, a personal relationship, an as the cabinet was said to be the link between parl ment and the administration, so the Mob media between the victor of the Glorious First of June the able seaman who had fought there. Also, altho the rewards of admirals and generals were out o proportion superior to those of common men, great people did at least share and share alike their followers in the 'whirling of the bols', bo sea and on land.

The licence demanded by the Mob, and the good-humour with which that licence was conceded in England were surprising. In France, the lidded pot might eventually boil over and scald the land with blood, but, on the other side of the Channel, there was an openness between the classes which allowed the vessel to let off steam. Throughout the letters of Horace Walpole there was an under-current of rioting, which was borne by the sufferers without the least panic: riots about weaving, in which the indignant Duke of Bedford received a stone weighing six pounds; riots about Wilkes, in which the Austrian Ambassador was taken out of his coach by the trouserless, turned upside down, and the number '45' chalked on the soles of his shoes; riots about an address to the King, in which a hearse was driven into St. James's Palace, with an executioner and an axe on top, and during which the pugilistic Lord Talbot managed to bag a rioter; riots about printing libels, in which George Selwyn and Charles James Fox were rolled in the gutter, and King George was pelted with an apple; riots about tea, with the American mob dressed as Red Indians: riots about admirals, in which Pitt, Fox and the Duke of Ancaster, drunk, joined the demonstrators and chose the best windows to smash; riots about Popery, in which it was rumoured that the lions had been loosed from the Tower menagerie; and riots about Peace, in which, according to Lord Onslow:

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bore with signal patience, but not without sensible marks of indignation and resentment at the indignities offered to his person and office. The glasses were all broken to pieces, and in this situation we were during our passage through the Park. The King took one of the stones out of the cuff of his coat, where it had lodged, and gave it to me, saying — 'I make you a present of this, as a mark of the civilities we have met with on our journey today.'

It was this indignation — this comic fuming at the 'disgraceful' behaviour of thousands who could easily have torn them limb from limb — this refusal to believe in the destructive capacity or in the seriously ill intentions of such amiable helots as surrounded them, which saved the English aristocracy from the guillotine. They refused to have the sense to realize that they were in danger, and the Mob, for lack of being taken seriously, remained comic.

The interesting feature of the disturbances was tha life was seldom lost in them. For the crowd was a English one, with a cockney sense of humour, and th voice in the back row was available, which turned t dangerous situation to a laugh. In France they mig massacre an ambassador, but they would hardly ha turned him upside down to write on his boots. England they might towzle the powdered wigs of the House of Lords, but in France they would hav their heads off. The sailors, weavers, harlots, c men, porters and Protestants of the English metro adopted their riots as public holidays. The chai particularly seem to have had a sense of humour. of them, very drunk, carrying home the prim, te and abstemious Mrs. Herbert, opened the top

chair and told her indistinctly: 'Madam, you are so drunk, that if you do not sit still, it will be impossible to carry you.'

Serious bloodshed took place only on one occasion, that of the Gordon Riots. Lord George Gordon was a maniac, who ended his life as an orthodox Jew, and he took occasion to foment the excitement arising from an attempt to alleviate the lot of Catholics, at that time labouring under civil disadvantages. The Mob was willing to pose as Protestant. On June 2nd, 1780, they assembled at Southwark to present an address against Popery. They marched to Westminster and commenced proceedings in the usual way. At the House of Lords, the Lords Townshend and Hillsborough had their wigs removed, and were left to enter with their back-hair round their ears; Lord Willoughby's periwig was violated; the Lord President of the Council had his shins hacked; the Archbishop of York had his sleeves torn off; and the fainting Bishop of Lincoln was scarcely rescued, from a neighbouring house, in female attire.

As bishop after bishop [said Jesse] entered the House of Lords with his lawn sleeves torn, and peer after peer with his hair hanging loose and his clothes covered with hair-powder, the scene grew more and more indecorous. 'It is hardly possible' we are told, 'to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the House exhibited. Some of their Lordships with their hair about their shoulders; others smutted with dirt; most of them as pale as the ghost in Hamlet, and all of them standing up in their several places, and speaking at the same instant. One Lord proposing to send for the Guards; another for the Justices or Civil Magistrates; many crying out "Adjourn! Adjourn!" while the skies

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chair and told her indistinctly: 'Madam, you are so drunk, that if you do not sit still, it will be impossible to carry you.'

Serious bloodshed took place only on one occasion, that of the Gordon Riots. Lord George Gordon was a maniac, who ended his life as an orthodox Jew, and he took occasion to foment the excitement arising from an attempt to alleviate the lot of Catholics, at that time labouring under civil disadvantages. The Mob was willing to pose as Protestant. On June 2nd, 1780, they assembled at Southwark to present an address against Popery. They marched to Westminster and commenced proceedings in the usual way. At the House of Lords, the Lords Townshend and Hillsborough had their wigs removed, and were left to enter with their back-hair round their ears; Lord Willoughby's periwig was violated; the Lord President of the Council had his shins hacked; the Archbishop of York had his sleeves torn off; and the fainting Bishop of Lincoln was scarcely rescued, from a neighbouring house, in female attire.

As bishop after bishop [said Jesse] entered the House of Lords with his lawn sleeves torn, and peer after peer with his hair hanging loose and his clothes covered with hair-powder, the scene grew more and more indecorous. 'It is hardly possible' we are told, 'to conceive a more grotesque appearance than the House exhibited. Some of their Lordships with their hair about their shoulders; others smutted with dirt; most of them as pale as the ghost in Hamlet, and all of them standing up in their several places, and speaking at the same instant. One Lord proposing to send for the Guards; another for the Justices or Civil Magistrates; many crying out "Adjourn! Adjourn!" while the skies

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Next day, the pickpockets, burglars and other disorderly persons began to take charge of the crowd. Looting and burning commenced. By the 6th the situation had passed out of hand, mansions were being stormed, fire employed and jails were being delivered.

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The district most rife with low sensuality appears to have been the neighbourhood of Holborn Hill, where the conflagration raged the fiercest. The flames, bursting forth in volumes from the houses in Fleet Market, from the Fleet Prison, from Barnard's Inn, and from Langdale's Distillery, were rendered more terribly vivid in consequence of their being fed by the streams of burning spirits which flowed from the last-named establishment. In the fierce glare, men, women and children were to be seen rushing from their homes, carrying off such articles as they were most anxious to preserve. Pails full of gin were handed about among the crowd. Not only men, but women and children, were to be seen sucking up gin and other spirituous liquors, as they flowed along the kennels. Here and there lay drunken wretches on the ground in a state of insensibility. Some of the rioters, while in this state, are said to have perished in the flames; others to have literally drunk themselves to death.

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On the last day, an extraordinary change of heart took place. *Omne animal*, the aristocracy might have quoted — with the rest of the old saw. The wounded withdrew themselves in secrecy, without a word. The dead who had not been found by pickets were surreptitiously lowered into the black waters of the Fleet Ditch. No investigation was asked or offered, by Mob or Parliament. The scarlet road to Blackfriars Bridge was covered with fresh earth, as if by common consent; the bullet-scarred houses were re-plastered, nobody knew by whom, and, when London awoke on June 9th, 1780, the blood-splashed walls of the Bank of England had been white-washed from top to bottom.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Necrophilist

ONE evening when he was in high fettle, Horace Walpole sat down to make a catalogue of the latest *bons mots*. He recorded a joke of Chesterfield's and two cruel ones by Peter Le Neve and Old Craggs, the latter being about a person called Arthur Moore. Then he went on:

I told this story the other day to George Selwyn, whose passion is to see coffins and corpses, and executions: he replied, 'that Arthur Moore had had his coffin chained to that of his mistress.' — 'Lord!' said I, 'how do you know?' — 'Why, I saw them the other day in a vault at St. Giles's.' He was walking this week in Westminster Abbey with Lord Abergavenny, and met the man who shews the tombs, 'Oh! your servant, Mr. Selwyn; I expected to have seen you here the other day, when the old Duke of Richmond's body was taken up.' Shall I tell you another story of George Selwyn before I tap the chapter of Richmond, which you see opens here very *apropos*? With this strange and dismal turn, he has infinite fun and humour in him. He went lately on a party of pleasure to see places with Lord Abergavenny and a pretty Mrs. Frere, who love one another a little. At Cornbury there are portraits of all the royalists and regicides, and illustrious headless. Mrs. Frere ran about, looked at nothing, let him look at nothing, screamed about Indian paper, and hurried over all the rest. George grew peevish, called her back, told her it was mon-

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strous, when he had come so far with her, to let him see nothing; 'And you are a fool, you dont know what you missed in the other room.' — 'Why what?' — 'Why, my Lord Holland's picture.' — 'Well! what is my Lord Holland to me?' — 'Why, dont you know,' said he, 'that my Lord Holland's body lies in the same vault in Kensington church with my Lord Abergavenny's mother?' Lord! she was so obliged, and thanked him a thousand times.

The great letter-writers at the peak of the Age of Scandal were thought to be Walpole and Selwyn — but for a hundred years after their death there existed a curious contrast between them. Horace had preserved his own letters. He had even asked to have them back, edited them, and caused fair copies to be made: a fact which militates against their spontaneity. Selwyn had preserved only the letters which wer written to him by others, and had, indeed, left stric instructions that his own were to be destroyed. Horac was a circle which existed by its centre, and Selwy was defined by his tangents. On a first inspection, t seemed humble and charming on Selwyn's part, a arrogant on Walpole's. Besides, it was not impossi to deduce Selwyn's character from the character of letters which he received. It was like a parlour ga It may have seemed to people of allusive mind in nineteenth century that his was the more subtle of bidding for immortality.

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Imprimis lecta erat Accusatio Tenoris subsequentis—The crimes wherewith George Augustus Selwyn, late of Hertford College, Gentleman Commoner, standeth charged, are these (viz.).

1. That on the twenty-first day of May last past, being drinking at a club, in company with several young noblemen and gentlemen of this University, at the house of one Charles Deverelle, an unlicensed seller of wines, near St Martin's Church in the City of Oxford, he the said George Augustus Selwyn did impiously affect to personate our Blessed Saviour, in His institution of the Holy Sacrament; and did ludicrously and profanely apply the words used by our Saviour at the said Institution, to the intemperate purposes of the said club.

2. That he the said George Augustus Selwyn did then and there take an old cup or chalice, which he had with no small pains provided for this wicked end, and did pour red wine into the same, and did cause the said Charles Deverelle to drink of the said wine in the said cup or chalice; and upon this, the said Selwyn's delivery of the said cup or chalice into the hands of him the said Deverelle, he the said Selwyn made use of these words, 'Drink this in remembrance of me—' or words to that effect.

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I remember dining [wrote William Wilberforce], when I was a young man, with the Duke of Queensberry, at his Richmond villa. The party was very small and select; Pitt, Lord and Lady Chatham, the Duchess of Gordon, and George Selwyn (who lived for society, and continued in it till he looked really like the waxwork figure of a corpse) were among the guests. We dined early, that some of our party might be ready to attend the Opera. The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames in all its glory; but the Duke looked on with indifference. 'What is there,' he said, 'to make so much of in the Thames? — I am quite tired of it, — there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same.'

Selwyn was loved by Horace Walpole himself, who wrote of him at his death:

I have had another and grievous memento, the death of poor Selwyn! His end was lovely, most composed and rational. From eight years old I had known him intimately without a cloud between us; few knew him so well, and consequently few knew so well the goodness of his heart and nature.

A better testimonial was the love of Lord Carlisle, a charming youth, but weak and impressionable and younger than the wit. It was better, because Carlisle had a better eye for friends than Walpole. Selwyn's acquaintances often assured him that they loved him,

3. That the said George Augustus Selwyn did afterwards then and there take the said cup or chalice, and having made signs as though he was blooding at one of his arms, did apply the neck of a bottle of wine into the said arm, from whence the said wine did gently distil into the said cup or chalice; whereupon the said Selwyn was heard to say, 'It bloods freely,' and that upon the refusal of one of the company to drink out of the said cup or chalice, he the said Selwyn did address himself unto that Person so refusing and upon this occasion did make use of these words, 'Here's my body, Hoc est corpus meum — you know what it is in Greek — ' or to that effect.

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There were a dozen stories about Selwyn's interest in death, torture and execution. He was supposed to frequent exhumations, and to have visited France in order to witness the horrid sufferings of Fr. Damien, who was nipped with red-hot pincers and torn limb from limb by cart-horses, for having attempted the life of Louis XV. On that occasion, he was said to have been accommodated with a grand-stand view by one of the numerous executioners, who had asked, 'Etes-vous bourreau?' and who had been told by Selwyn, 'Non, Monsieur, je na'i pas cet honneur; je ne suis qu'un amateur.' It was at the same execution, incidentally, that a tender-hearted lady who was interested in the prevention of cruelty to animals was said to have objected to the whipping of the horses, as inhuman, when they were pulling Fr. Damien to bits. The story about Selwyn was apocryphal, and had also been told of La Condamine. Indeed, there was a regular incrustation of legend to this particular martyrdom, for La Condamine, who was deaf, was believed to have asked one of the executioners what Damien was saying? 'Monsieur, il jure horriblement' 'Ma foi, il a bien raison!'

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GEORGE SELWYN AND HIS DOG 'RÂTON'

ither because they did so, or else because they feared his tongue. Lord Holland used jokingly to assume, to his face, that he was a eunuch.

There were a dozen stories about Selwyn's interest in death, torture and execution. He was supposed to frequent exhumations, and to have visited France in order to witness the horrid sufferings of Fr. Damien, who was nipped with red-hot pincers and torn limb from limb by cart-horses, for having attempted the life of Louis XV. On that occasion, he was said to have been accommodated with a grand-stand view by on of the numerous executioners, who had asked, 'Etes-vous bourreau?' and who had been told by Selwyn, 'Non, Monsieur, je na'i pas cet honneur; je ne suis qu'un amateur.' It was at the same execution, incidentally, that a tender-hearted lady who was interested in the prevention of cruelty to animals was said to have objected to the whipping of the horses, as inhuman, when they were pulling Fr. Damien to bits. The story about Selwyn was apocryphal, and had also been told of La Condamine. Indeed, there was a regular incrustation of legend to this particula martyrdom, for La Condamine, who was deaf, wa believed to have asked one of the executioners wh Damien was saying? 'Monsieur, il jure horriblemen 'Ma foi, il a bien raison!'

In the same way, many of the Selwyn stories sounc too good to be true. 'You know', said Walpole, 'Geo never thinks but *à la tête tranchée*: he came to t t'other day to have a tooth drawn, and told the that he would drop his handkerchief for the sig Lord Holland, on his death bed, told the servant: next time Mr. Selwyn calls, show him up: if I am



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Apart from the jokes, which he seldom resented, there was a substratum of morbidity. Walpole related an unpleasant story of his activities. 'A footman of Lord Dacre has been hanged for murdering the butler. George Selwyn had a great hand in bringing him to confess it. That Selwyn should be a capital performer in a scene of that kind is not extraordinary: I tell it you for the strange coolness which the young fellow, who was but nineteen, expressed: as he was writing his confession, "I murd—" he stopped, and asked, "How do you spell *murdered?*"'

Selwyn received letters such as the following: 'Harrington's porter was condemned yesterday. Cadogan and I have already bespoken places at the Brazier's, and I hope Parson Digby will come time enough to be of the party. I presume we shall have your honour's company, if your stomach is not too squeamish for a single swing.' When he was not at a hanging, his friends took care to send him a description.

The best tale of his Ingoldsby-legendary leanings was told by Horace Walpole, in his description of the execution of Lord Lovat—a description which it is impossible not to quote in full.

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even days: the evidence was as strong as possible; and after all he had denounced, he made no defence . . . The old creature's behaviour has been foolish, and at last indecent. I see little of parts in him, nor attribute much to that cunning for which he is so famous: it might catch wild Highlanders; but the art of dissimulation and flattery is so refined and improved, that it is of little use now where it is not very delicate. His character seems a mixture of tryanny and pride in hi villainy. I must make you a little acquainted with him. In his own domain he governed despotically, either burning or plundering the lands and houses of his open enemies, or taking off his secret ones by the assistance of his cook, who was his poisoner in chief. He had two servants who married without his consent; he said, 'You shall have enough of each other,' and stowed them in a dungeon, that had been a well, for three weeks. When he came to the Tower, he told them, that if he were not so old and infirm, they would find it difficult to keep him there. They told him they had kept much younger: 'Yes,' said he, 'but they were inexperienced: they had not broke so many gaols as I have.' At his own house he used to say, that for thirty years of his life he never saw a gallows but it made his neck ache. His last act was to shift his treason upon his eldest son, whom he forced into the rebellion. H told Williamson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, 'W will hang my eldest son, and then my second sha marry your niece.' He has a sort of ready humour repartee, not very well adapted to his situation. O day that Williamson complained that he could sleep, he was so haunted with *rats* — he replied, 'W do you say, that you are so haunted with *Ratcliff* The first day, as he was brought to his trial, a wo looked into the coach, and said, 'You ugly old don't you think you will have that frightful head off?' He replied, 'You ugly old ——, I believe I sh At his trial he affected great weakness and infirm

but often broke out into passions; particularly at the first witness, who was his vassal: he asked him how he dared to come thither! . . . The two last days he behaved ridiculously, joking, and making everybody laugh even at his sentence. He said to Lord Ilchester, who sat near the bar, 'Je meurs pour ma patrie, et ne m'en soucie gueres.' When he withdrew, he said, 'Adieu! my lords, we shall never meet again in the same place.' He says he will be hanged; for that his neck is so short and bended, that he should be struck in the shoulders. I did not think it possible to feel so little as I did at so melancholy a spectacle, but tyranny and villainy wound up by buffoonery took off all edge of concern.

Arlington Street, April 10, 1747

I deferred writing to you as long as they deferred the execution of old Lovat, because I had a mind to send you some account of his death, as I had of his trial. He was beheaded yesterday, and died extremely well, without passion, affectation, buffoonery, or timidity; his behaviour was natural and intrepid. He professed himself a Jansenist; made no speech, but sat down a little while in a chair on the scaffold, and talked to the people round him. He said, 'He was glad to suffer for his country, *dulce est pro patria mori*; that he did not know how, but he had always loved it, *nescio qua natale solum, &c.*; that he had never swerved from his principles; that this was the character of his family, who had been gentlemen for five hundred years.' He lay down quietly, gave the sign soon, and was despatched at a blow. I believe it will strike some terror into the Highlands, when they hear there is any power great enough to bring so potent a tyrant to the block. A scaffold fell down and killed several persons; one, a man that had rid post from Salisbury the day before to see the ceremony; and a woman was taken up dead with a live child in her arms.

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Selwyn took an interest in more than one small girl, but his complicated relationship with the one called Mie-Mie was the passion of his life. She was th natural daughter of his friend the Duke of Queens berry, by an Italian Marchioness, and it was lor thought that Selwyn disputed her paternity in th belief that he was himself the father. It is clear fro the letters that this was not the case. So far as attitude was defined, he appeared to have taker fancy to the child as a baby, pitied it, disapprovec

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The third main trait deducible from contemporary evidence was Selwyn's wit.

Humour is an article which seems to have tw compartments, permanent and temporary, the latte being the larger. It is subject to fashion. 'Real mirth wrote Dr. Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets*, 'mu always be natural, and nature is uniform. Men ha been wise in very different modes, but they have ways laughed the same way.' Mrs. (Thrale) Pio who was no fool, wrote in the margin: 'I think I think national mirth a great discriminatio national character. Wisdom is dressed up alik almost all . . . One way of being wise, I think, thousand of being merry. . . ' There seem to b

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'Why are you doing that?' 'Oh, to please the tortoise.'
'Why, child, you might as well stroke the dome of
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To put it bluntly, it turned out that the great wit of Almack's had been a shallow, complaining and ignorant valetudinarian. He had written in a mixture of poor English, bad French and worse Italian. After all the talk of the 'monstrous good things' which George had said, the letters which came to light were the ill-spelt and endless chatter of an empty-headed fellow — a laughing stock even, who had suffered the indignity, not only of falling in love with a baby that called him Yan-Yan, but also of catching the whooping cough from it at the age of sixty-one.

Mimi never went out to air in the coach, never ate, or did anything, without Selwyn attending her. When she began to grow up, she used to treat him with offensive disrespect. She took the tone, which many of the young men of the time had done, of treating him, this great wit, this father of all the *bons mots* that were circulating in London, as tiresome, and what is called a bore . . . However, Mlle. Fagniani's treatment of him did not in any degree diminish his sort of maternal fondness and partiality towards her. Looking at her one day, he said to Storer, 'What a pleasure it is to love that girl so tenderly without having had the trouble t get her' . . . Storer says that Selwyn professed never t have had connection with a woman but seven times i the whole course of his life, and that the last time wa with a maid at the Inn at Andover, when he was 2 Yet he was a stout, healthy man, and never had a less natural taste or appetite imputed to him. But

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ton, as late as the beginning of the present [19th]
century, it was customary on Sunday evenings to ring
a bell at intervals, in order that the pleasure seekers
from London might assemble in sufficient numbers to
return in safety.

Even an old maid like Horace Walpole was prepared to catch a housebreaker for the morbid Selwyn to hang, with the same indulgence as one might collect a caterpillar for a favourite nephew.

Last Sunday night, being as wet a night as you sh
see in a summer's day, about half an hour after twel
I was just come home from White's, and undressing
step into bed, I heard Harry, who you know lies
wards, roar out, 'Stop thief!' and run down stai
ran after him. Don't be frightened; I have no
one enamel, nor bronze, nor have been shot th
the head again. [He had been missed by a hig
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ton, as late as the beginning of the present [19th]
century, it was customary on Sunday evenings to ring
a bell at intervals, in order that the pleasure seekers
from London might assemble in sufficient numbers to
return in safety.

Even an old maid like Horace Walpole was prepared to catch a housebreaker for the morbid Selwyn to hang, with the same indulgence as one might collect a caterpillar for a favourite nephew.

Last Sunday night, being as wet a night as you sh
see in a summer's day, about half an hour after twel
I was just come home from White's, and undressing
step into bed, I heard Harry, who you know lies
wards, roar out, 'Stop thief!' and run down stair
ran after him. Don't be frightened; I have no
one enamel, nor bronze, nor have been shot th
the head again. [He had been missed by a hig
man on a previous occasion.] A gentlewoma
lives at Governor Pitt's, next door but one to
called out 'watch'; two men, who were sentin
away, and Harry's voice after them. Down
and with a posse of chairmen and watchmen f

third fellow in the area of Mr. Freeman's house. Mayhap you have seen all this in the papers, little thinking who commanded the detachment. Harry fetched a blunderbuss to invite the thief up. One of the chairmen, who was drunk, cried, 'Give me the blunderbuss, I'll shoot him!' But as the general's head was a little cooler, he prevented military execution, and took the prisoner without bloodshed, intending to make his triumphal entry into the metropolis of Twickenham with his captive tied to the wheels of his post-chaise. I find my style rises so much with the recollection of my victory, that I don't know how to descend to tell you that the enemy was a carpenter, and had a leather apron on. The next step was to share my glory with my friends. I despatched a courier to White's for George Selwyn, who, you know, loves nothing upon earth so well as a criminal, except the execution of him. It happened very luckily that the drawer, who received my message, had very lately been robbed himself, and had the wound fresh in his memory. He stalked up into the club-room, stopped short, and with a hollow trembling voice said, 'Mr. Selwyn! Mr. Walpole's compliments to you, and he has got a housebreaker for you!' A squadron immediately came to reinforce me, and having summoned Moreland with the keys of the fortress, we marched into the house to search for more of the gang. Col. Seabright with his sword drawn went first, and then I, exactly the figure of Robinson Crusoe, with a candle and lanthorn in my hand, a carbine upon my shoulder, my hair wet and about my ears, and in a linen night-gown and slippers. We found the kitchen shutters forced, but not finished; and in the area a tremendous bag of tools, a hammer large enough for the hand of a jael, and six chisels!

The life of alarms and excursions was lived by a society whose outlook, moreover, was ceasing to

cal. They knew too much about the classics to them novel or exhilarating. On the contrary, it the Gothic, the Eastern, the Celtic, anything not nected with ancient Rome, which had begun to oxicate the period. The 'Druid' was a special invenon of the Age of Scandal. An elderly gentleman in a ightshirt and mistletoe, who denounced the Plantagenet kings from some majestic crag in Snowdonia, the Druid bore little relationship to the cannibals and duk-duk dancers of Gaelic prehistory. It was the age of the grotto. 'Here, John,' the Rev. William Bowles (1762-1850) would say, when visitors called, 'run with the crucifix and the missal to the hermitage, and set the fountain going.' The 'awfulness' of Swiss scenery was what made everybody shudder, and between 1750 and 1795 there were no less than sixty books published about travels in Switzerland. *Rasselas*, *Ossian*, *Caractacus*, *Vathek*, Percy's *Reliques* or the *Castle o Otranto* were the latest rage, and people were s excited by the non-classical renaissance, at least thir years before the birth of Keats, that they could scarce wait to realize the Gothick dream. Indeed, th seldom did wait to realize it. It generally collapse ruin upon their infatuated heads, for lack of tires details like foundations. Walpole's vision of St berry Hill was erected in such a hurry that ther no time to supply it with real tracery: it had painted on paper, which peeled off. Beckford's mare abbey at Fonthill had a tower three hund high, nearly high enough for a pupil to mano aeroplane with safety, which fell down as s had been put up. He put it up again, with energy, but down it came once more. Even

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The company assembled in the hall [wrote Creevey] were nine hundred in number, ladies and gentlemen, at five tables . . . We were marched entirely round the hall, till we arrived at the top, where a table on a slight elevation went across the hall for us guests. Western's great delight was three men in complete armour from top to toe, with immense plumes of feathers upon their helmets. They were seated in three niches in the wall over our table . . . It was their duty to rise and wave their truncheons when the Lord Mayor rose and gave the toasts; which they did with great effect, till one of them fainted away with the heat and fell out of his hole upon the heads of the people below.

The slap-stick of the age was balanced by a romantic eccentricity in vice, by a macabre virility, which equalled that of the Restoration or of the Elizabethan dramatists. Webster and Tourneur had not imagined any horrors which were not attempted in the Age of Scandal. 'I am glad you are aware of Miss Pitt', wrote Horace Walpole. 'Her very first slip was with her eldest brother; and it is not her fault that she has not made still blacker trips.' Incest was the *frisson* of the century, as homosexuality was to be that of the twentieth. Nearly everybody dealt with it, from Walpole to Byron. The Marquis de Sade, in real life not a very sensational person, would have paled beside Mrs. Brownrigg, who whipped her apprentices to death. A Mr. Waddy in the Irish troubles ate half a priest (Barrington, I. 264.) A lover of the wife of

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> Having no more public events to tell you, I am sorry I must leap to a private story, in which there is far from being either bravery or gallantry, but which is savage enough to have been transmitted from the barbarians on the Mosquito shore . . . Well! but my story comes only 'cross the Irish Channel. Lord C., a recent peer of that kingdom, and married to a great heiress there, a very amiable woman, had, however, a more favourite mistress. The nymph, like My Lord, was no mirror of constancy, but preferred a younger handsomer swain. The Peer, frantic with jealousy discovered an assignation, and, hiring four bravoe broke in upon the lovers; when, presenting a pistol the head of his rival, he bade him make instant opti of being shot, or reduced to the inability of giving a man jealousy. The poor young man was so ungall as to prefer a chance for life on any terms. The br Lord ordered his four ruffians to seize the crim and with his own hand performed the b operation. The victim died the next day, the mu escaped, but one of his accomplices is taken.

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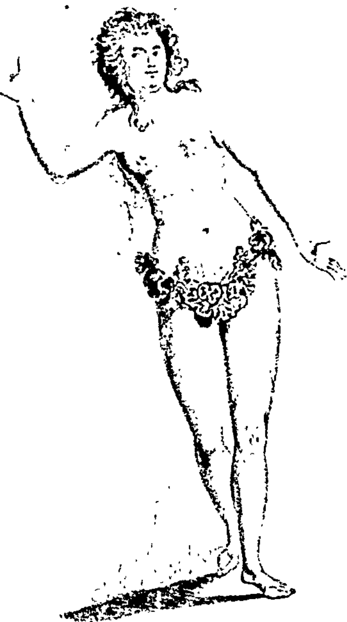
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> Quand la charette passe devant le Palais-Royal [said Saint-Amand of the execution of Madame Du Barry], la victime aperçoit le balcon d'une maison de modes où plusieurs ouvrières regardent le funèbre cortège. Cette maison, elle la reconnaît; c'est là où, toute jeune fille, elle travaillait comme apprentie modiste. Hélas! pourquoi est-elle devenue Madame la comtesse Du Barry? Ses traits sont alternativement d'une pâleur livide et d'une rouge foncé. Elle se débat au milieu de l'exécuteur et de ses deux aides, qui ont peine à la retenir sur le banc. Ses cris redoublent. 'La vie! la vie! dit-elle, qu'on me laisse la vie, et je donne tous mes biens à la nation.' Alors, dans la foule, un homme réplique: 'Tu ne donnes à la nation que ce qui lui appartient, puisque le tribunal vient de les confisquer, tes biens.' Un charbonnier, placé devant cet homme, se retourne, et lui donne un soufflet. La victime recommence ses supplications. 'Mes amis, s'écrie-t-elle, mes amis, je n'ai jamais fait de mal à personne! Au nom du ciel, je vous en prie, sauvez-moi!' Qui sait? les tricoteuses elles-mêmes, les furies qui lèchent la guillotine vont peut-être s'émouvoir à ces accents de la femme du peuple. Cette fois ce n'est pas une reine qui va mourir, c'est une comtesse, mais une comtesse qui a d'abord été ouvrière. On fouette les chevaux, on brusque le dénoûment pour arreter la compassion de la foule. Enfin la charette arrive sur



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If the little seamstress's life had been tragic, it had at least been uninhibited, as were the lives of many of her sisters on both sides of the Channel. Some of these ladies, like Lady Harriet Wentworth, eloped with their footmen: some, like Mrs. Murray, were attempted by their footmen to be ravished. A prostitute called Nancy Parsons, after living with the Dukes of Dorset and Grafton, married Lord Maynard and was described in the peerages as 'widow of —— Horton Esq.' The illegitimate daughter of a milliner did better than Madame Du Barry, and became the sister-in-law of George III.

A Lady Cathcart who died in 1789 had married a Captain Macguire for her fourth husband, but had displeased him by wearing a ring on which was written.

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The editor [wrote Maria Edgeworth] was acquaint with Colonel M'Guire, Lady Cathcart's husband; has lately seen and questioned the maid-servant w lived with Colonel M'Guire during the time of L Cathcart's imprisonment. Her ladyship was locke in her own house for many years, during which p her husband was visited by the neighbouring ge and it was his regular custom at dinner to sen compliments to Lady Cathcart, informing her th

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Why she called herself Cathcart when she was married to M'Guire or Macguire is not explained, and unfortunately she does not figure in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But it seems that in the sequel she did have her fifth husband. In any case, she danced at the Welwyn Assembly, a free woman, when past eighty, and lived to be ninety-eight.

In this respect she was more fortunate than the Lady Grant mentioned by Boswell:

The true story of this lady, which happened in this
century, is as frightfully romantick as if it had been the
fiction of a gloomy fancy. She was the wife of one o
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nightly journeys was conveyed to the Highland shor
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All this was small romance, moreover, compared
with the stories of the leading stars.

The notorious Miss Chudleigh began by fascinating
the Earl of Bath and nearly married the Duke of
Hamilton. She became a maid-of-honour, clandestinely wedded the future Earl of Bristol, had a son
by him in secret, went to a ball in a gauze dress,
and caught the eye of George II. He overcame
his meanness to the extent of presenting her with a
watch which cost him thirty-five guineas, 'out of his
own privy purse and not charged on the civil list'.
She also made a conquest of Frederick II, who
admired her ability to swallow two bottles of wine.
'When reproached by her royal mistress', said Wraxall
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When the Duke died, he left her his immense fortune, and she went off to Italy, to vamp Pope Clement XIV. Unfortunately, the story of her bigamous marriage had got about, and it was in the interest of the Duke's other heirs to prove that she was really the Countess of Bristol. It became necessary for her to tamper with the marriage register once again, this time in order to destroy it. The coil was too difficult. She was brought to trial before the House of Lords, found guilty, and barely escaped from being branded in the hand. The Countess-Duchess was now demoted to a countess, but for some reason she was left in possession of the fortune. The Earl of Bristol was unable to divorce her, because there was evidence of his collusion in the bigamy. She retired to Russia, where she got on well with her sister in frailty, Catherine the Great, and thence to France, where she purchased a royal palace for £50,000. She died at sixty-eight, in 1788, after other love affairs, and after receiving an offer of marriage from Prince Radzivil. Her picture as she appeared in the gauze dress still survives, wearing a ravishing smirk. It is a single garment, quite transparent, and probably explains her career. Throughout her life, she had enjoyed two or more of everything that was obtainable, counting the husbands and the bottles of wine. When a two-headed calf was born in Essex, Horace Walpole suggested that it must be hers. Sir Robert Keith s... that he would be willing to marry her, if a grenad... might be joined with him in the nuptials. Other w... reported that she had given birth to twins, thus offe... Lord Chesterfield the opportunity for one of his gre... *mots*. She mentioned the scandal to him with s... lated indignation, on which his Lordship ansv...

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The two penniless Irish girls had been brought to gland by their father, John Gunning of Castle oote, when they were about eighteen years of age, 1751. Walpole considered that their beauty epended upon there being two of them, 'for singly have seen much handsomer women than either'. Whatever the explanation, they 'made more noise than any of their predecessors since the days of Helen'. Their loveliness was so great that it was a nuisance to them. Once, when they went to Hampton Court, and were examining the Beauty Room there, the housekeeper brought another party, saying, 'This way, ladies, here are the Beauties.' The Gunnings, who had been persecuted by curious mobs already, supposed that this was a reference to their own charms, and flew into a passion, exclaiming that they had come 'to see the palace, not to be shown as a sight themselves'. The misunderstanding was not unnatural, for on one occasion seven hundred people sat up all night to see them leave an inn in Yorkshire, and, on another, a shoemaker in Worcester made two and a half guineas by exhibiting a shoe which he had made for one of them, at a penny a head. In later life, this one had to be protected by a guard of soldiers, whe walking in Hyde Park.

The younger sister's marriage was the more brillian the elder's the more tragic. Both were dazzling.

The younger of them married the Duke of Hamil with a ring of the bed-curtain at half-past twelv

When the Duke died, he left her his immense fortune, and she went off to Italy, to vamp Pope Clement XIV. Unfortunately, the story of her bigamous marriage had got about, and it was in the interest of the Duke's other heirs to prove that she was really the Countess of Bristol. It became necessary for her to tamper with the marriage register once again, this time in order to destroy it. The coil was too difficult. She was brought to trial before the House of Lords, found guilty, and barely escaped from being branded in the hand. The Countess-Duchess was now demoted to a countess, but for some reason she was left in possession of the fortune. The Earl of Bristol was unable to divorce her, because there was evidence of his collusion in the bigamy. She retired to Russia, where she got on well with her sister in frailty, Catherine the Great, and thence to France, where she purchased a royal palace for £50,000. She died at sixty-eight, in 1788, after other love affairs, and after receiving an offer of marriage from Prince Radzivil. Her picture as she appeared in the gauze dress still survives, wearing a ravishing smirk. It is a single garment, quite transparent, and probably explains her career. Throughout her life, she had enjoyed two or more of everything that was obtainable, counting the husbands and the bottles of wine. When a two-headed calf was born in Essex, Horace Walpole suggested that it must be hers. Sir Robert Keith said that he would be willing to marry her, if a grenadier might be joined with him in the nuptials. Other wags reported that she had given birth to twins, thus offering Lord Chesterfield the opportunity for one of his greatest *mots*. She mentioned the scandal to him with simulated indignation, on which his Lordship answered

politely: 'Madam, I make a point of never believing more than half of what I hear.'

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The younger sister's marriage was the more brilliant, the elder's the more tragic. Both were dazzling.

The younger of them married the Duke of Hamilton with a ring of the bed-curtain at half-past twelve at

night, in Mayfair Chapel, and was presented at Court. 'The crowd was so great that even the noble crowd in the Drawing Room clambered upon chairs and tables to look at her.' She was carried to the north by her Duke, where, said Walpole, 'her history is not unentertaining; Duke Hamilton is the abstract of Scotch pride; he and his Duchess, at their own house, walk in to dinner before the company; sit together at the upper end of the table; eat off the same plate; and drink to nobody beneath the rank of Earl'. Hamilton died in 1758, and she then married the Duke of Argyll, taking with her a good portion of the Hamilton pride. She had a spirited brush with the resilient Boswell when he was trundling Dr. Johnson round Scotland — owing to the fact that Boswell had opposed her in a law-suit. The description of the dinner-party at which she dealt with him was a piece of high comedy, bu unfortunately too long to quote as an aside, except i fragments:

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Evidently poor Bozzy had not been told the story about the 'rank of Earl'. He got no reply to this either, but, after much more:

I made some remark that seemed to imply a belief in *second sight*. The duchess said, 'I fancy you will be a *Methodist*.' — This was the only sentence her grace deigned to utter to me; and I take it for granted, she thought it a good hit on my *credulity* in the Douglas cause. . . .
We went to tea. The duke and I walked up and down the drawing-room, conversing. The duchess still continued to shew the same marked coldness for me; for which, though I suffered from it, I made every allowance, considering the very warm part I had taken for Douglas . . . .
Her grace made Dr. Johnson come and sit by her, an asked him why he made his journey so late in the yea 'Why, madam (said he), you know Mr. Boswell mu attend the Court of Session, and it does not rise till 12th of August.' — she said, with some sharpness *know nothing* of Mr. Boswell.' . . . I indeed felt it ra too severe, but when I recollected that my punishm was inflicted by so dignified a beauty, I had that of consolation which a man would feel who is stra by a *silken cord*.

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The elder daughter's match was with Lord Coventry. Her simple and pathetic story comes through the pages of Walpole clearly; for she was silly loving, honest and without pretence.

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Even if Lord Coventry were 'silly in a wise way', there may have been something behind the wisdom when he coursed his wife round the table to remove her make-up. It may have had white lead in it. Her married life lasted only for eight years, before she had to pay the price of being beautiful. Her sister the Duchess was said to have consumption, but it has been suggested that her own disease was due to the cosmetics.

Poor Lady Coventry concluded her short race with the same attention to her looks. She lay constantly on a couch, with a pocket-glass in her hand; and when that told her how great the change was, she took to her bed the last fortnight, had no light in her room but the lamp of a tea-kettle, and at last took things in through the curtains of her bed, without suffering them to be undrawn. The mob, who never quitted curiosity about her, went, to the number of ten thousand, only to see her coffin. If she had lived to be ninety like Helen, I believe they would have thought that her wrinkles deserved an epic poem. Poor thing! how far from ninety! she was not eight-and-twenty! Adieu!

CHAPTER TEN

A Perfect Tragedy

SOMEBODY asked a Frenchman to describe the Duke of Newcastle, in 1745. This was the statesman who governed England for seven years, and who retired from office poorer than he came. The Frenchman fumbled for some time, muttering about 'un certain tatillonage', and ended by suggesting that one ought to imagine a dead body, hanged in chains, which was always fidgeting to be hanged somewhere else.

Thomas Pelham Holles was a buffoon. A pompous, fussy, honest, ambitious but not avaricious nonentity, who lost half an hour every morning when he got up and chased it for the the rest of the day — who was nicknamed Permis because he always said 'Est-i permis?' before he addressed a remark to the King — was his sheepish fate to be the butt of every ration being, and to be dismissed in the end, without havi meant to do harm, forgotten, foolish, innoce despicable and still fidgeting to be hung somew else — so long as he might be hung in the Garter. story of his standing on the great Duke of Cum land's train, at the funeral of George II, is well kn Other stories were told of his persecution by the the period:

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numerous and magnificent. The two Princes were there, deep hazard, and the Dutch deputies, who are a proverb for their dulness: they have brought with them a young Dutchman who is the richest man of Amsterdam. I am amazed Mr. Yorke has not married him! But the delightful part of the night was the appearance of the Duke of Newcastle, who is veering round again, as it is time to betray Mr. Pitt. The Duchess [of Bedford] was at the very upper end of the gallery, and though some of the Pelham court were there too, yet they shewed so little cordiality to this revival of connection, that Newcastle had nobody to attend him but Sir Edward Montagu, who kept pushing him all up the gallery. From thence he went into the hazard room, and wriggled, and shuffled, and lisped, and winked, and spied, till he got behind the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Bedford, and Rigby; the first of whom did not deign to notice him; but he must come to it. You would have died to see Newcastle's pitiful and distressed figure, — nobody went near him: he tried to flatter people, but they were too busy to mind him: in short, he was quite disconcerted; his treachery used to be so sheathed in folly, that he was never out of countenance; but it is plain he grows old. To finish his confusion and anxiety, George Selwyn, Brand and I, went and stood near him, and in half whispers, that he might hear, said 'Lord, how he is broke! how old he looks!' then I said 'This room feels very cold: I believe there never was fire in it.' Presently afterwards I said, 'Well, I'll not stay here; this room has been washed today.' In short, I believe we made him take a double dose of Gascoign's powder when he went home.

WALPOLE TO MONTAGU, 17

There were several anecdotes about his farcical ability to be in the wrong place, as he was at the coronation of George III.

e Coronation is over: 'tis even a more gorgeous nt than I imagined. I saw the procession and the all; but the return was in the dark. In the morning ey had forgot the Sword of State, the chairs for King nd Queen, and their canopies. They used the Lord Mayor's for the first, and made the last in the Hall: so they did not set forth till noon; and then, by a childish compliment to the King, reserved the illumination of the Hall till his entry; by which means they arrived like a funeral, nothing being discernible but the plumes of the Knights of the Bath, which seemed the hearse... Of all the incidents of the day, the most diverting was what happened to the Queen. She had a retiring-chamber, with *all* conveniences, prepared behind the altar. She went thither – in the *most convenient* what found she but – the Duke of Newcastle!

WALPOLE TO CONWAY, 1761

It was this creature who was the first minister of England, and who was determined to remain in tha position, when the Seven Years War began. Th French were prepared, the English were not, and was essential to the Duke that his ministry shou remain in power. The French had invaded the Engl base of Minorca before he had noticed anything am on the island there was an octogenarian governor, half the officers of the garrison were on leave. S thing had to be done, in fear of the Mob's resent so Admiral Byng was sent to stop the gap. The F were already ashore with an army, besiegi doting governor, and the Mediterranean was balance.

Admiral Byng was not exactly an impressiv At all events, he was not flamboyant. He wa

numerous and magnificent. The two Princes were there, deep hazard, and the Dutch deputies, who are a proverb for their dulness: they have brought with them a young Dutchman who is the richest man of Amsterdam. I am amazed Mr. Yorke has not married him! But the delightful part of the night was the appearance of the Duke of Newcastle, who is veering round again, as it is time to betray Mr. Pitt. The Duchess [of Bedford] was at the very upper end of the gallery, and though some of the Pelham court were there too, yet they shewed so little cordiality to this revival of connection, that Newcastle had nobody to attend him but Sir Edward Montagu, who kept pushing him all up the gallery. From thence he went into the hazard room, and wriggled, and shuffled, and lisped, and winked, and spied, till he got behind the Duke of Cumberland, the Duke of Bedford, and Rigby; the first of whom did not deign to notice him, but he must come to it. You would have died to see Newcastle's pitiful and distressed figure, — nobody went near him: he tried to flatter people, but they were too busy to mind him: in short, he was quite disconcerted; his treachery used to be so sheathed in folly that he was never out of countenance; but it is plain he grows old. To finish his confusion and anxiety, George Selwyn, Brand and I, went and stood near him, and in half whispers, that he might hear, said 'Lord, how he is broke! how old he looks!' then I said 'This room feels very cold: I believe there never was a fire in it.' Presently afterwards I said, 'Well, I'll not stay here; this room has been washed today.' In short, I believe we made him take a double dose of Gascoign's powder when he went home.

WALPOLE TO MONTAGU, 175[illegible]

There were several anecdotes about his farcical ability to be in the wrong place, as he was at the coronation of George III.

e Coronation is over: 'tis even a more gorgeous nt than I imagined. I saw the procession and the all; but the return was in the dark. In the morning ey had forgot the Sword of State, the chairs for King nd Queen, and their canopies. They used the Lord Mayor's for the first, and made the last in the Hall: so they did not set forth till noon; and then, by a childish compliment to the King, reserved the illumination of the Hall till his entry; by which means they arrived like a funeral, nothing being discernible but the plumes of the Knights of the Bath, which seemed the hearse . . . Of all the incidents of the day, the most diverting was what happened to the Queen. She had a retiring-chamber, with *all* conveniences, prepared behind the altar. She went thither – in the *most convenient* what found she but – the Duke of Newcastle!

WALPOLE TO CONWAY, 1761

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When Byng, after confused negotiations at Gibraltar about his contradictory instructions, had sighted the French fleet off Minorca, he proceeded to race for the weather gage. He was willing to lay his foul bottoms ship to ship, against the French line.

His enemies were newly launched from Toulon, and their clean hulls gave them the legs of the encrusted English. They were also better gunned.

Byng's adversary, the Marquis de la Galissonière, was a talented commander. He knew that the unwished initiative lay with Byng. His own troops were already landed, and his duty was only to preserve their lines of communication. The English had two duties: to raise the siege and to protect Gibraltar. If Galissonière could keep himself 'in being', he would be doing all that was needed. Byng had to keep in being and also to do something more.

In the last stages of laying the lines abreast of ea other, one line of ships was accustomed to await t onslaught, while the possessor of the weather gage sai down upon it. The attackers were compelled to m the last quarter mile 'end-on', while the defenders w in broadside. In the bow of a battleship there only two guns, called the bow-chasers, while the wa line could bear with its whole armament.

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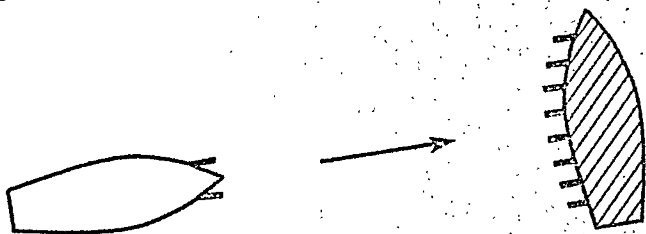
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Byng. Then, with his fleet in line ahead, their broadsides bearing, he would lie-to and await the English.



As they sailed down upon him, but before they came to close quarters, he would rake them with his full metal, while the English guns, except for the bow-chasers, could not be brought to bear. When they did reach close quarters, but before they were near enough to take his wind, he would use his superior speed to withdraw to a distance, would re-form his line, and would again await the suicidal attack. By repeating this manœuvre *da capo*, he hoped to use his broadsides throughout the engagement, while his enemy's gun would never bear at all.

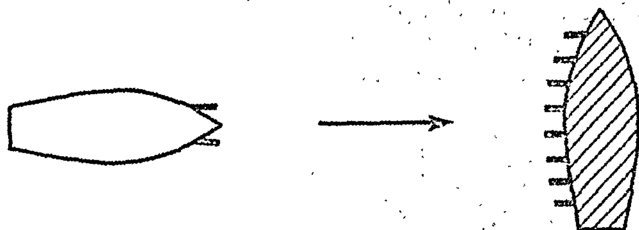
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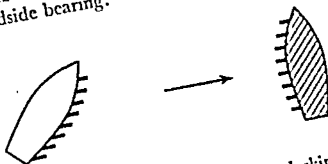
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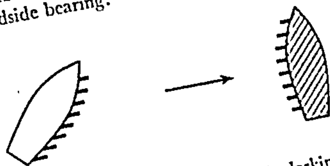
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Angelo visited a warship after Lord Howe's victory 1794 (the Glorious First of June) and from him we may extract a verbal picture of the conditions under which that council of war was probably held. 'When we went below deck, the scene was truly frightful; on each side were hammocks on the floor, with numbers of dying and wounded; many of their comrades were seen praying to them, holding up the cross, and some appeared lifeless. At this moment I fancy I see their pale faces and black beards. Here great havoc must have been made, as the shot appeared, from the grooves on the deck, like that of a ploughshare on the earth, to have raked through the cabin, from stem to stern. Our curiosity did not last long; the smell, with the sight of the dying, and the groans of the wounded, soon put an end to our naval visit.'

Such were the bare bones of a battle which lost Minorca, and which wrecked the Newcastle administration. The miserable Duke, however, was a man who could hanker for authority to the last. In a desperate attempt to retain power, he proceeded to lay the blame on Byng: the blame for a war begun before the ministry was ready for it, for ships not clean nor properly manned, and for instructions from which it was impossible to determine whether Minorca or Gibraltar had been the vital base. Grub Street writers were hired to blast the admiral's reputation. Mobs were suborned to howl for his death, singing

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The fussy George II, with his foible for personal courage, was informed that his commander had

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he wretched sacrifice was relieved of his command. was haled home in disgrace, locked in a small room h a streaming cold and no assistance or con- niences, burnt in effigy, mocked by the Mob and put p for court martial. The members of the court, like o many old tars, knew nothing of law. They were convinced of Byng's innocence, but they had been told that the fire-eating King would be furious if he were acquitted. They brought in a verdict which was in- tended to be a vote of censure, but which turned out to be a verdict of guilty. Their consciences smote them: they asked to be allowed to explain themselves to parliament: they broke down in the explanation. The great men of Europe did their utmost to save the vic- tim. Pitt pleaded for him with the King, but was 'cut very short'. Lord Temple was so rude to his majesty on the same subject that he was never forgiven. Dr. Johnson rallied to the rescue with his pen. Voltaire who was later to make the bitter explanation tha Byng had been shot 'pour encourager les autre wrote a testimonial from Paris. Galissonière hims spoke to the admiral's bravery. The fabulous Richelieu, also an enemy, forwarded a testimo from France. 'Je vous assure que tout ce que j'a et su de lui ne devait tourner qu'à sa gloire.' R Admiral West, Byng's second-in-command, who been commended by the court, resigned his flag red-tape, Permis, the guttural King and the Mob, were not to be turned back.

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He had written to Sarah two days before his
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March 12, 1757
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thank you over and over again for all your endeavou
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A few minutes before he was shot, he handed a paper
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ON BOARD HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP MONARQUE, IN PORTS-
MOUTH HARBOUR. MARCH 14, 1757.

A few moments will now deliver me from the virulent persecution, and frustrate the further malice of my enemies — nor need I envy them a life subject to the sensations my injuries and the injustice done me must create. Persuaded I am, justice will be done to my reputation hereafter. The manner and cause of raising and keeping up the popular clamor and prejudice against me, will be seen thro'. I shall be considered (as I now perceive myself) a victim destined to divert the indignation and resentment of an injured and deluded people from the proper objects. My enemies themselves must even now think me innocent. Happy for me at this my last moment, that I know my own innocence, and am conscious that no part of my country's misfortunes can be owing to me. I heartily wish the shedding of my blood may contribute to the happiness and service of my country, but canno
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He said, that being acquitted of cowardice, and being persuaded on the coolest reflection that he had acted for the best, and should act so again, he was not unwilling to suffer. He desired to be shot on the quarter-deck, not where common malefactors were; came out at twelve, sat down in a chair, for he would not kneel, and refused to have his face covered, that his countenance might shew whether he feared death; but being told that it might frighten his executioners, he submitted, gave the signal at once, received one shot through the head, another through the heart, and fell. Do cowards live or die thus? Can that man want spirit who only fears to terrify his executioners? Has the aspen Duke of Newcastle lived thus?

WALPOLE TO MANN, 1757

Byng was 53 at death. He was buried at Southill Bedfordshire, with this inscription on his monument

TO THE PERPETUAL DISGRACE OF PUBLIC JUSTICE
THE HONBLE JOHN BYNG, ESQRE
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
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MARCH 14TH IN THE YEAR 1757, WHEN
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> Admiral Byng's tragedy was completed on Monday—a perfect tragedy.

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should be on their side, God forgive them, as I do, and may the distress of their minds and uneasiness of their consciences, which in justice to me they have represented, be relieved and subside as my resentment has done. The Supreme Judge sees all hearts and motives, to Him I must submit the justice of my cause.

J. BYNG

He said, that being acquitted of cowardice, and being persuaded on the coolest reflection that he had acted for the best, and should act so again, he was not unwilling to suffer. He desired to be shot on the quarter-deck, not where common malefactors were; came out at twelve, sat down in a chair, for he would not kneel, and refused to have his face covered, that his countenance might shew whether he feared death; but being told that it might frighten his executioners, he submitted, gave the signal at once, received one shot through the head, another through the heart, and fell. Do cowards live or die thus? Can that man want spirit who only fears to terrify his executioners? Has the aspen Duke of Newcastle lived thus?

WALPOLE TO MANN, 1757

Byng was 53 at death. He was buried at Southill, Bedfordshire, with this inscription on his monument:

TO THE PERPETUAL DISGRACE OF PUBLIC JUSTICE
THE HONBLE JOHN BYNG, ESQRE
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
FELL A MARTYR TO POLITICAL PERSECUTION
MARCH 14TH IN THE YEAR 1757, WHEN
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CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Church Militant

It has become an aphorism among scientists that great discoveries are seldom due to the efforts of a single person. Darwin's theory of natural selection was anticipated by Alfred Russel Wallace, before Darwin was ready to publish, and the *Origin of Species* began with a list which mentioned dozens of embyro evolutionists, who had preceded them both. The earliest in that list were Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, who published *c.* 1795, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the writer's eccentric grandfather, 1794, Lamarck, 1801, and apparently Goethe. But these were far from being the first Darwinians.

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Similar ideas had been floating about since the seventeen twenties, when Elijah Fenton published a couplet which inverted the modern sequence:

Foes to the tribe from which they trace their clan,
As monkeys draw their pedigree from man.

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The *esprits forts*, who were often young noblemen in revolt against established decency without the backing of scholarship for a foundation, later found their best voice perhaps in Byron — who wrote, in 1811, a letter of mingled nonsense and penetration, that was memorable for at least one sentence about immortality:

> One remark, and I have done; the basis of your religion is *injustice*; the *Son* of *God*, the *pure*, the *immaculate*, the *innocent*, is sacrificed for the *Guilty*. This proves *His* heroism; but no more does away *man's* guilt than a schoolboy's volunteering to be flogged for another would exculpate the dunce from negligence, or preserve him from the Rod. You degrade the Creator, in the first place, by making Him a begetter of children; and in the next you convert Hin into a Tyrant over an immaculate and injured Bein who is sent into existence to suffer death for the bene of some millions of Scoundrels, who, after all, seem likely to be damned as ever. As to miracles, I ag with Hume that it is more probable men should *li* be *deceived*, than that things out of the course of Na should so happen. Mahomet wrought mira

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Besides, I trust that God is not a Jew, but the God of all mankind; and as you allow that a virtuous Gentile may be saved, you do away the necessity of being a Jew or a Christian.

I do not believe in any revealed religion, because no religion is revealed: and if it pleases the Church to damn me for not allowing a *nonentity*, I throw myself on the mercy of the '*Great First Cause, least understood*', who must do what is most proper; though I conceive He never made anything to be tortured in another life, whatever it may be in this. I will neither read *pro* nor *con*. God would have made His will known without books, considering how very few could read them when Jesus of Nazareth lived, had it been His pleasure to ratify any peculiar mode of worship. As to your immortality, if people are to live why die? And our carcases, which are to rise again, are they worth raising?

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The aristocracy was, however, Christian politically and by instinctive prejudice, and probably even Queensberry would have been deeply shocked by the opinions of a modern biologist.

Deists, *esprits forts* and agnostics, all lumped together, might have made up less than one-hundredth of 1 per cent of the population.

The remainder were Christians of various kinds; many of them were clergymen; and the Established Church in the eighteenth century was an exciting institution. The sinecures and place-hunting of Parliament were duplicated in the life of religion; its prizes were as great and the competitors were as practical. Bishop Chandler was accused of having paid £9000 for the see of Durham. Trollope's picture of the Warden at Barchester was no fiction.

I saw St. Cross, too [wrote Gray to the Rev. James Brown in 1764], the almshouse of Noble Poverty (so it was called), founded by Henry de Blois and Cardinal Beaufort. It maintains nine decayed footmen, and a master (Chancellor Hoadly), who has 800L. a-yea
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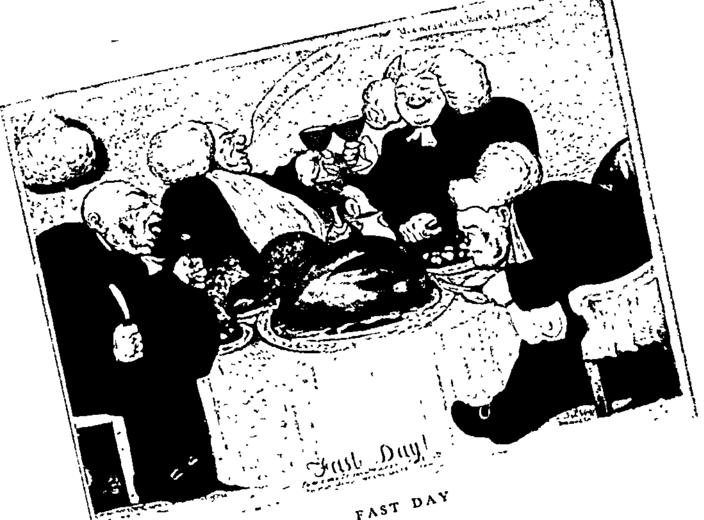
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And by means of her Alliance to
The illustrious family of Stanhope
She had the merit to obtain
For her husband and children
Twelve several employments
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Sometimes the winners of prizes were a trifle unexpected, as was the case with Dr. Lancelot Blackburne, Walpole's 'jolly old Archbishop of York, who had all the manners of a man of quality, though he had been a *buccaneer*', and who was said to have kept a seraglio at the Palace. A later Bishop of Norwich was believed to be his natural son.

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he servant's manner made him change his deter-
nination. When he came out, he found the King
tanding in a little dressing room, near the hall door.
The King took him by both hands. 'My Lord Arch-
bishop of Canterbury (he said), I wish you joy. Not a
word: go back to your guests.' . . .
On Pitt's arrival next day . . . Lord Sidmouth told
Dean Milman that he believed such strong language
had rarely ever passed between a Sovereign and his
Minister.

JESSE

Sometimes the strain of competition was too much for those of weaker nerves. Florizel's flogging tutor Dr. Arnold stood the course till he had achieved the Canonry of Windsor and the Archdeaconry of Lichfield, but then ran mad, and ever afterwards walked about his house in a mitre.

No wonder the successful prelates were proud and pompous. No wonder they disapproved of penniless demagogues like Wesley and were pleased by a church bell, cast during the eighteenth century in defiance of that preacher, which bore the noble inscription: 'Hurrah for the Church of England and down with Enthusiasm.' No wonder that Bishop Dawes, on being asked if he had seen a late eclipse of the moon replied with grandeur: 'No, Madam, but my chaplain did; *I* saw the eclipse of the sun.'

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said immediately he could not go; but something in the servant's manner made him change his determination. When he came out, he found the King standing in a little dressing room, near the hall door. The King took him by both hands. 'My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury (he said), I wish you joy. Not a word: go back to your guests.' . . .
On Pitt's arrival next day . . . Lord Sidmouth told Dean Milman that he believed such strong language had rarely ever passed between a Sovereign and his Minister.

JESSE

Sometimes the strain of competition was too much for those of weaker nerves. Florizel's flogging tutor Dr. Arnold stood the course till he had achieved the Canonry of Windsor and the Archdeaconry of Lichfield, but then ran mad, and ever afterwards walked about his house in a mitre.

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stupidity. Our diversion was dancing or jumping about, without a violin or any music, singing of foolish healths, and drinking all the time as fast as it could be well poured down; and the parson of the parish was one among the mixed multitude. If conscience declares right from wrong, as doubtless it sometimes does, mine is one that I may say is soon offended; for, I must say, I am always very uneasy at such behaviour, thinking it not like the behaviour of the primitive Christians, which I imagine was more in conformity to our Saviour's gospel. Nor would I be thought to be either a cynic or a stoic, but let social improving discourse pass round the company. About three o'clock, finding myself to have about as much liquor as would do me good, I slipt away unobserved, leaving my wife to make my excuse. Though I was very far from sober, I came home, thank God, very safe and well, without even tumbling; and Mr. French's servant brought my wife home at ten minutes past five.

25. (Thursday) This morning about six o'clock just as my wife was got to bed, we was awaked by Mrs. Porter, who pretended she wanted some cream of tartar; but as soon as my wife got out of bed, she vowed she should come down. She found Mr. Porter, Mr. Fuller and his wife, with a lighted candle, and part of a bottle of wine and a glass. The next thing was to have me downstairs, which being apprized of I fastened my door. Up stairs they came, an threatened to break it open; so I ordered the boys open it, when they poured into my room; and, modesty forbid me to get out of bed, so I refrain but their immodesty permitted them to draw me of bed, as the common phrase is, topsy turvy; however, at the intercession of Mr. Porter, they mitted me to put on my ••••••, and inste my upper cloaths, they gave me time to put o wife's petticoats; and in this manner they ma

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March 3 (Sunday) We had as good a sermon as I ever heard Mr. Porter preach, it being against swearing.

7 (Tuesday) We continued drinking like horses, as the vulgar phrase is, and singing till many of us were very drunk, and then we went to dancing and pulling wigs, caps, and hats; and thus we continued in this frantic manner, behaving more like mad people than they that profess the name of Christians. Whether this is consistent to the wise saying of Solomon, let any one judge: Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and he that is deceived thereby is not wise.

10. Supped at Mr. Porter's, where the same scene took place, with the exception that there was no swearing and no ill words, by reason of which Mr. Porter calls it innocent mirth, but I in opinion differ much therefrom.

11. (Saturday). At home all day. Very piteous.

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Among the lower classes, Methodism was already beginning to substitute the bogy God of the Victorians for the Arch-archbishop of a brighter epocha. The dismal and humourless fanaticism of Wesley — who preached 42,400 sermons during his ministry — was undermining the bishops in their wigs and bands, and the abominable proletariat had begun to go a-whoring after the strange and gloomy gods of guilt and shame. The original Quakers had really quaked, and Wesley's diary records with pious satisfaction in 1761 that 'I was scarce come into the room where a few believers were met together when one began to tremble exceedingly, and soon after sunk to the floor'. Sydney Smith, who complained on his death-bed of being so weak that 'I verily believe, if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength or energy enough to stick it into a Dissenter', made a collection of cuttings from Methodist papers.

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An apothecary being sent for, as soon as he entered the house, and heard his dreadful howlings, he inquired if he had not been bitten by a mad dog. His appearance, likewise, seemed to justify such a suspicion, his countenance resembling that of a wild beast more than that of a man.

Though he had no feverish heat, yet his pulse beat above 150 in a minute. To abate the *mania*, a quantity of blood was taken from him, a blister was applied, his head was shaved, cold water was copiously poured over him, and fox-glove was administered. By these means his fury was abated; but his mental agony continued, and all the symptoms of madness which his bodily strength, thus reduced, would allow, till the following Thursday. On that day he seemed to have recovered his reason, and to be calm in his mind. In the evening he sent for the apothecary; and wished to speak with him by himself. The latter, on his coming, desired every one to leave the room, and thus addressed him: 'C——, have you not something on your mind?' 'Ay,' answered he, '*that is it!*' He then acknowledged that, early in the month of June, he had gone to a fair in the neighbourhood, in company with a number of wicked young men: that they drank at a public-house together till he was in a measur intoxicated; and that from thence they went int other company, where he was criminally connect with a harlot. 'I have been a miserable creatur continued he, 'ever since; but during the last th days and three nights, I have been in a stat desperation.' He intimated to the apothecary, he could not bear to tell this story to his mini 'But,' said he, 'do you inform him that I shal die in despair; for light has broken in upon

Iowever that might be, there is reason to believe he ad been for some years under powerful convictions of his miserable condition as a sinner. In June 1806, these convictions were observed to increase, and that in a more than common degree. From tha time he went into no company; but, when he wa not at work, kept in his chamber, where he was employed in singing plaintive hymns, and bewailing his lost and perishing state.

He had about him several religious people; but could not be induced to open his mind to them, or to impart to any one the cause of his distress. Whether this contributed to increase it or not, it did increase, till his health was greatly affected by it, and he was scarcely able to work at his business.

While he was at meeting on Lord's day, September 4th, he was observed to labour under very great emotion of mind, especially when he heard the following words. 'Sinner, if you die without an interest in Christ, you will sink into the regions of eternal death.'

On the Saturday evening following, he intimated to the mistress of the house where he lodged, that some awful judgement was about to come upon him; and as he should not be able to be at meeting next day, requested that an attendant might be procured to stay with him. She replied, that she would herself stay at home, and wait upon him; which she did. On the Lord's day, he was in great agony of mind. His mother was sent for, and some religious friend visited him; but all was of no avail. That night wa a night dreadful beyond all conception. The horro which he endured brought on all the symptoms raging madness. He desired the attendants not come near him, lest they should be burnt. He sa that 'the bed-curtains were in flames, — that smelt the [illegible]ne, — that devils were come fetch him, [illegible] was [illegible] hope for him,

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The aristocratic attitude of the *poco-curante* to all these religious emotions was summed by the villainous Thurlow, who, as Lord Chancellor, told a deputation of Non-conformists: 'I'm against you, by God. I am for the Established Church, damme! Not that I have any more regard for the Established Church than for any other Church, but because it is established. And if you can get your damned religion established, I'll be for that too!'

It is doubtful whether even establishment would have reconciled Thurlow to the lowest of religious classes then existing — the Ranters, from whom the other dissenting branches may possibly have sprung. These uneducated and generally insane enthusiasts formed a floating sub-normal who were willing to believe in anything that came along: in Joanna Southcott (1750-1814) as the new Virgin Mary, or in Mary Tofts as the mother of dismembered rabbits. They derived from fanatics of the previous century: from people like Reeve and Muggleton (1609-98), wh[o] believed that heaven was six miles away; like Abiez[er] Coppe (1619-72), who claimed to have baptized sev[en] thousand persons and who preached stark naked; li[ke] Roger Crab (1621-80), who ate nothing but do[ck] leaves and grass; like John Smith (d. 1612), who ba[p]tized himself; or like Thomas Tany (fl. 1649-55), w[ho] preferred to circumcise himself, had fits, senten[...]

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Reeve 'to eternal damnation' in writing, and tried to fight his way into the House of Commons with a rusty sword. In the Age of Scandal their more amusing representatives were Samuel Best, who diagnosed the diseases of his followers by licking the palms of their hands and drank nothing but gin and rhubarb; and John Finlayson, who explained that the earth was a perfect sphere, 'not shaped like a garden turnip, as the Newtonians make it', that the sun was 'very different from anything we can make here below' and that the stars were 'oval-shaped immense masses of frozen water, with their largest ends foremost'.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Learned Bargee

ONE day, probably in 1715, a little boy was making his way from school. Somebody was usually sent to fetch him, but on this occasion the conductor had not arrived. In 1715 the child would have been six years old.

He set out by himself, though he was then so near-sighted, that he was obliged to stoop down on his hands and knees to take a view of the kennel [gutter], before he ventured to step over it. His schoolmistress, afraid that he might miss his way, or fall into the kennel, or be run over by a cart, followed him at some distance. He happened to turn about and perceive her. Feeling her careful attention as an insult to his manliness, he ran back to her in a rage, and beat her, as well as his strength would permit.

This child — who had scrofula, one good eye, an inherited melancholia, St. Vitus's dance, no money, and other disabilities — emerged from penury and Grub Street about forty years later, as the author of the first English Dictionary. He was finally buried in Westminster Abbey with a simple inscription:

As an author, Johnson's fame was, to tell the truth, scarcely more than contemporary; for it depended upon *novelty of style*, in an age which loved personal novelties like the clothes of the later Brummell. To them, the not-ungraceful antithetical balancing feats with which he wrote of 'amourous propensities' rather than of 'love' were new and strange. As a lexicographer, he was of importance. As a conversationalist, the equivalent of our modern 'brains trust' — who would have been lost without the microphone of Boswell — he was of the first rank. It seems impossible to say anything about him in this capacity, except in the words of his devoted biographer.

> . . . while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair,
> he commonly held his head to one side towards his
> right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner,
> moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing
> his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his
> hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various
> sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, o
> what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving
> half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play bac
> wards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking lik
> hen, and sometimes protruding it against his up
> gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under
> breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied someti
> with a thoughtful look, but more frequently wi
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> deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he u
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When he walked the streets [wrote Kearsley], what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet.

His figure was large and well-formed, and his countenance of the cast of an ancient statue; yet his appearance was rendered strange and somewhat uncouth by convulsive cramps, by the scars of that distemper which it was once imagined the royal touch could cure, and by a slovenly mode of dress. He had the use only of one eye; yet so much does mind govern and even supply the deficiency of organs, that his visual perceptions, as far as they extended, were uncommonly quick and accurate. So morbid was his temperament that he never knew the natural joy of a free and vigorous use of his limbs; when he walked, it was like the struggling gait of one in fetters: when he rode, he had no command or direction of his horse, but was carried as if in a balloon.

The key to this extraordinary figure, who talked 'for fame' in an age of great talkers, lay in its disabilities. Johnson was an ambitious and romantic person.

Johnson, however, had a noble ambition floating in his mind, and had, undoubtedly, often speculated on the possibility of his supereminent powers being rewarded in this great and liberal country by the highest honours of the state. Sir William Scott informs me, that upon the death of the late Lord Lichfield, who was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, he said to Johnson, 'What a pity it is, Sir, that you did not follow the profession of the Law. You might have been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, and attained to the dignity of the peerage; and now that the title of Lich-



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He could never have been Lord Chancellor with his twitches and his fetters, never a great general with his one bad eye, never anything except a literary stylist and famous speaker, using the two members which remained without disease, his tongue and his pen. 'That people should endeavour to excel in conversation,' he said, 'I do not wonder: because in conversation praise is instantly reverberated.'

He wanted to succeed as a man in spite of his afflictions — to have 'bottom' and to sail on his own bottom to success. This was why the little boy turned back to beat his schoolmistress, whose attention had been 'an insult to his manliness'. It was also why he could not bear to be conquered in conversation, which was his only means of excellence. He attached so much importance to victory in talk, that he dreamed about it. 'He related, that he had once in a dream a contest of wit with some other person, and that he was very much mortified by imagining that his opponent had the better of him.' 'There is no arguing with Johnson,' said Goldsmith bitterly, 'for, if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt end of it.' If h were flurried by losing, he would turn round like beast at bay, and argue *ad hominem*.

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It was indicative that two of the famous people who detested the old law-giver should have been Goldsmith and Horace Walpole: the first, because he belonged to a more ancient and more subtle race, which *always* argued *ad hominem*, and which did not share the absolute values premised by Johnson; the second, because he was a gentleman, whose attitude to such values was patrician. Johnson was a middle-class, High Church Tory, who had arranged the universe somehow or other in his own mind; and for whom its Creator was a personage in a brigadier wig, who spent his time, as Walpole might have remarked drinking Fog to the health of Old England. From such premises, the Doctor proceeded to lay down th law with a strong and facile bluntness, which w wrong as often as it was right. But people like Walpo did not share the same deity. 'You know,' said latter, 'Sir Francis Dashwood used to say that L Shrewsbury's Providence was an angry old man i

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They generally compared him to savage animals. Tom said that he laughed like a rhinoceros. Goldsmith said that if he were a fish, he would talk like a whale. A Glasgow newspaper compared him seriously, as a compliment, to the same mammal, and so did Hayley. Chesterfield called him a 'respectable Hottentot', Walpole a 'Caliban', Anna Seward an 'old growler' and an 'old elephant'. Boswell told him that he tossed and gored like a bull. Boswell's father called him Ursa Major.

The mention of the wolf had led Johnson to think of other wild beasts; and while Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Langton were carrying on a dialogue about something which engaged them earnestly, he, in the midst of it, broke out, 'Pennant tells us of Bears —' [What he added, I have forgotten.] They went on, which he being dull of hearing, did not perceive, or, if he di was not willing to break off his talk; so he continued vociferate his remarks, and *Bear* ('like a word in catch' as Beauclerk said,) was repeatedly heard intervals, which, coming from him who, by those w did not know him, had been so often assimilated to ferocious animal, while we who were sitting ar could hardly stifle laughter, produced a very ludi

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It was true that the most usual simile for him was that of a Bear, and it was only when his acquaintances grew to love him more closely that they realized, like Boswell, 'that he had nothing of the bear about him, but the skin'. The old animal had a tender heart.

Nor would it be just under this head, to omit the fondness which he shewed for animals which he had taken under his protection. I never shall forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge his cat: for whom he himself used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants having that trouble should take a dislike to the poor creature. I am, unluckily, one of those who have an antipathy to a cat, so that I am uneasy when in the room with one; and I own, I frequently suffered a good deal from the presence of this same Hodge. I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr. Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while my friend, smiling, and half whistling, rubbed down hi back, and pulled him by the tail; and, when I observe he was a fine cat, saying: 'Why, yes, Sir; but I hav had cats whom I liked better than this;' and then, if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, addin 'but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed.' This reminds me of the ludicrous account which gave Mr. Langton, of the despicable state of a you gentleman of good family. 'Sir, when I heard of last, he was running about town shooting cats.' then, in a sort of kindly reverie, he bethought hi of his own favourite cat, and said, 'But Hodge sh be shot: no, no, Hodge shall not be shot.'

His house, when he was rich enough to afford it, as a hospital for poor and afflicted people: for Dr. Levett, Mrs. Williams, Desmoulins, Miss Carmichael and for the black servant. He bore no malice for momentary defeats. Sometimes the 'whiff and wind of his fell sword' was terrible enough: but sometimes the blow was held back, the pistol-butt not brought into action, and a blush would actually mantle the awful cheek:

I was at this time myself a water-drinker, upon trial, by Johnson's recommendation. JOHNSON: 'Boswell is a bolder combatant than Sir Joshua: he argues for wine without the help of wine: but Sir Joshua with it.' SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS: 'But to please one's company is a strong motive.' JOHNSON (who from drinking only water [at that time] supposed everybody who drank wine to be elevated): 'I won't argue any more with you, Sir. You are too far gone.' SIR JOSHUA: 'I should have thought so indeed, Sir, had I made such a speech as you have now done.' JOHNSON (drawing himself in, and I really thought blushing): 'Nay, don't be angry. I did not mean to offend you.'

Sometimes he would apologize even more touch- ingly, after the stroke:

The Gentleman who had dined with us at Dr. Perc came in. Johnson attacked the Americans with emperate vehemence of abuse. I said something their favour; and added that I was always sorry w he talked on that subject. This, it seems, exasper him, though he said nothing at the time. The c was charged with sulphureous vapour, which afterwards to burst in thunder. — We talked gentleman who was running out his fortune in Lo

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BOSWELL: 'But why did you not take your revenge
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Behind the roars and bumps, there was the pathos
of the wretched child which had turned to beat its
mistress:

Surely I shall not spend my whole life with my own
total disapprobation?

Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations*

On Monday, the 16th, I sat for my picture and walked
a considerable way without inconvenience. In the
afternoon and evening I felt myself light and easy, an
began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed, an
in a short time waked and sat up, as has been long m
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I was alarmed, and prayed God, that however
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Soon after I perceived that I had suffered a para
stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I
no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful

at I wondered at my own apathy, and considered at perhaps death itself when it should come, would xcite less horror than seems now to attend it. In order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and I think repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and strange as it may seem, I think slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand; I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands. I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand, to act as occasion should require. In penning this note, I had some difficulty; my hand, I knew not how or why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden; and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly, and give me great hopes; but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers as to repeat the Lord's Prayer with no very imperfect articulation.

JOHNSON TO MRS. THRAL

In spite of his melancholia, however, it would b idle to think of him as a pathetic character. Cheerf ness, as he remarked, kept breaking in. So did come

'When I was ill,' said he, 'I desired he [Mr. Lang would tell me sincerely in what he thought my lif faulty. Sir, he brought me a sheet of paper, on w he had written down several texts of Scri recommending Christian charity. And w questioned him what occasion I had given for s

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On Monday, the 16th, I sat for my picture and walked a considerable way without inconvenience. In the afternoon and evening I felt myself light and easy, and began to plan schemes of life. Thus I went to bed, and in a short time waked and sat up, as has been long my custom, when I felt a confusion and indistinctness in my head, which lasted I suppose about half a minute. I was alarmed, and prayed God, that however he might afflict my body, he would spare my understanding. This prayer, that I might try the integrity of my faculties, I made in Latin verse. The lines were not very good, but I knew them not to be very good: I made them easily, and concluded myself to be unimpaired in my faculties.

Soon after I perceived that I had suffered a paralytic stroke, and that my speech was taken from me. I had no pain, and so little dejection in this dreadful

I wondered at my own apathy, and considered t perhaps death itself when it should come, would cite less horror than seems now to attend it. n order to rouse the vocal organs, I took two drams. Wine has been celebrated for the production of eloquence. I put myself into violent motion, and I think repeated it; but all was vain. I then went to bed, and strange as it may seem, I think slept. When I saw light, it was time to contrive what I should do. Though God stopped my speech, he left me my hand; I enjoyed a mercy which was not granted to my dear friend Lawrence, who now perhaps overlooks me as I am writing, and rejoices that I have what he wanted. My first note was necessarily to my servant, who came in talking, and could not immediately comprehend why he should read what I put into his hands. I then wrote a card to Mr. Allen, that I might have a discreet friend at hand, to act as occasion should require. In penning this note, I had some difficulty; my hand, I knew not how or why, made wrong letters. I then wrote to Dr. Taylor to come to me, and bring Dr. Heberden; and I sent to Dr. Brocklesby, who is my neighbour. My physicians are very friendly, and give me great hopes; but you may imagine my situation. I have so far recovered my vocal powers as to repeat th Lord's Prayer with no very imperfect articulation.

JOHNSON TO MRS. THRA

In spite of his melancholia, however, it woul idle to think of him as a pathetic character. Che ness, as he remarked, kept breaking in. So did co

'When I was ill,' said he, 'I desired he [Mr. L would tell me sincerely in what he thought m faulty. Sir, he brought me a sheet of paper, he had written down several texts of recommending Christian charity. And questioned him what occasion I had given

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Johnson, at the time when the paper was presented to him, though at first pleased with the attention of his friend, whom he thanked in an earnest manner, soon exclaimed, in a loud and angry tone, 'What is your drift, Sir?' Sir Joshua Reynolds pleasantly observed, that it was a scene for a comedy, to see a penitent get into a violent passion, and belabour his confessor.

There it seems equally pleasant to leave the old Hottentot, angrily rebutting the only failing which could be laid to his charge, and there he died, at the age of seventy-five, after his long reign as the greatest debater in England. The feat by which he had established that claim for ever, was perhaps the *hysteron proteron* with which he had once defeated a Thames bargee, on his own water:

It is well known that there was formerly a rude custom for those who were sailing upon the Thames to accost each other as they passed in the most abusive language they could invent, generally, however, with as much satirical humour as they were capable of producing. Addison gives a specimen of this ribaldry, in number 385 of the 'Spectator', when Sir Roger de Coverly and he are going to Spring Garden. Johnson was once eminently successful in this species of contest; a fellow having attacked him with some coarse raillery, Johnson answered him thus, 'Sir, your wife, *under pretence of keeping a bawdy house*, is a receiver of stolen goods.'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Tears

HUMANS have a faculty for believing that their own fashions are right and proper, and that these have been ordained to exist as such since the beginning of time. We have a fashion in the twentieth century of considering tears to be unmanly, so we assume that they have always been effeminate. But there have been periods when it has been correct for males to cry, and when males have cried, loud and long, about a surprising variety of subjects, to the applause and even to the admiration of their friends.

In Chaucer, both sexes weep indiscriminately. Troilus cried, and so did the tedious paladins, Palamon and Arcite. Almost every bruiser in the *Morte d'Arthur* would burst into tears sooner or later, and Lancelot wept 'as he had been a child that had been beaten'. The first lachrymose period seems to have reached without interruption to the days of Shakespeare, when there was a slight swing in the opposite direction. 'Albeit unused to the melting mood,' the tragic hero then explained, with a hint of apology, before proceeding to shed his tears as fast as the Arabian tree her medicinable gum. Curiously enough the reaction against the accepted fashion began on the continent at about the same time, and Sancho Pan-

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The jealousy of accomplished weepers came to a head in Fanny Burney, who became positively cattish about an unfortunate girl called Sophy Streatfield, because the latter was able to cry at will. It was because Fanny herself was probably the second-best weeper in the kingdom, and could not endure to be beaten. (The third-best weeper was Anna Seward who, on revisiting her father's rectory in 1793, 'could not restrain the gushing tears, through almost the whole of the five hours I passed in that dear village'.) Large tracts of Fanny's employment at Court were passed in tears, which she recorded with relish. When a harmless mad woman had attempted to stab the King with a blunt table knife, without doing him an harm whatever, 'the Queen glanced round upon th Duchess of Ancaster and Lady Charlotte Bertie, bo of whom had burst into tears. "How I envy you!" exclaimed; "I cannot cry!"' The news was repor in the Palace, and there was not 'a dry eye in ci of the Lodges, on the recital of his danger'. A evening concert, 'the Princesses wept contin

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The jealousy of accomplished weepers came to a head in Fanny Burney, who became positively cattish about an unfortunate girl called Sophy Streatfield, because the latter was able to cry at will. It was because Fanny herself was probably the second-best weeper in the kingdom, and could not endure to be beaten. (The third-best weeper was Anna Seward who, on revisiting her father's rectory in 1793, 'could not restrain the gushing tears, through almost the whole of the five hours I passed in that dear village'.) Large tracts of Fanny's employment at Court were passed in tears, which she recorded with relish. When a harmless mad woman had attempted to stab th King with a blunt table knife, without doing him a harm whatever, 'the Queen glanced round upon Duchess of Ancaster and Lady Charlotte Bertie, b of whom had burst into tears. "How I envy you!" exclaimed; "I cannot cry!"' The news was rep in the Palace, and there was not 'a dry eye in of the Lodges, on the recital of his danger'. evening concert, 'the Princesses wept conti

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The real howl came when George went mad. That old horror Thurlow, a Lord Chancellor of even more duplicity than most Lords Chancellor, spoke to the House 'in a state of agitation which continued till a flood of tears came to his relief' — he happened to be lying — and, when allowed to visit the lunatic monarch, he came out 'so extremely affected . . . tha the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his feet had difficulty to support him'. At Windsor, the Queen glided down a passage 'drowned in tears', and 'the footmen, the housemaids, the porter, the sentinels, all cried, even bitterly, as they looked on'. It was as bad when the King got better, for his loyal subjects began to celebrate. 'I assure you,' wrote Fanny proudly, 'I cried twenty times in the day.'

This was strange, when one comes to think of it, and unlike what ought to have been expected in an un-Romantic age. It was only when the Romantics themselves came along, that people began to dry their eyes. Here again, it was the opposite of the expected It was the Romantics who began to frown on mascu line emotion. They still wept a good deal, but uneasily like Othello. By Tennyson's time, people felt shame faced when they did so. 'Tears, idle tears', they ha to explain uncomfortably, before they could let the flow. Unpoetical people even tried to hide them unc the bedclothes.

TEARS

Oh, would I were dead now,
Or up in my bed now,
To cover my head now
And have a good cry!

In the end, it was positively asserted, even by the poets, that weeping in males was not to be the thing. They were to work instead. For men must work, stated Charles Kingsley firmly, and women must weep, and the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep. The fiat had gone forth, under which we labour today.

But will the fashion continue? There have been more sobbing centuries in the past, than there have been stoical ones. If this little history of émotion is accurate, then the changes from one fashion to the other have generally happened under a Queen — under Elizabeth, Anne or Victoria. Are we ourselves, under some future Elizabeth II, to revert to tears? Will Lord Lundy be brought back from governing New South Wales? Will the Commons again be drowned in limpid drops? Will some reader of this small anthology write to its author, as Mrs. Thrale wrote to Fanny Burney: 'My eyes red with reading and crying, I stop every moment to kiss the book and to wish it was my Burney [Mr. White]? It is to be hoped so.

The Queen, still more deeply struck, could only from time to time hold out her hand to the King, and say — "I have you yet!" . . . When I went to the Queen at night, she scarce once oped her lips. Indeed, I could not look at her without feeling the tears ready to start into my eyes'.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Injured Queen

PERHAPS the most dazzling scandal of the eighteenth century, and for that reason the best hushed up, was one which involved a King of Denmark, his physician in ordinary and a great-aunt of Queen Victoria's. Her name was Caroline Matilda.

She was the youngest sister of George III, the posthumous daughter of Frederick Prince of Wales – though Glenbervie asserted that her real father wa[s] Lord Bute – and she was born in 1751.

'She was reared', says the *Historical Gallery of Criminal Portraitures* (1823), 'in that secluded, domesticated way that it might be supposed the daughter of an opulent and educated country gentleman would be reared, except that she had a greater number of preceptors. As she improved in years and understanding, she became the darling of all her attendants and domestics. That peculiar cast of beauty developed itself which attaches to those females of robust frames, who grow corpulent as they advance in years. So rapid was her growth, that at fourteen years of age her appearance was more than commonl[y] womanly. At *fifteen*, this half-blown rosebud was to[rn] from her mother's arms, and hurried away to a dista[nt] land, to be married to a giddy, dissolute, debilitat[ed]



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Other authorities stated that her hair was lighter than straw, and one of the complaints made by her new husband, after their first night together, was to exclaim pathetically: 'Elle est si blonde!'

'Christian the VII, her royal husband, was rather diminutive in person, and effeminate, if not insignificant in his features. His complexion was remarkably fair. He had a handsome mouth, fine set of teeth, and a remarkably small and elegantly formed hand. Had not his constitution been shattered by precocious and destructive indulgencies, he might have been an amorous man; as it was, Matilda found him lascivious and imbecile. — This is all that decency permits being said, the rest must be imagined.'

It need not be imagined, however, by people who understand French. Cabanès explains the oddities of Matilda's husband:

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The *Tableau de la Cour de Copenhague*, by M. Caillard, adds that although the King was a frequenter of brothels, yet, when he had persuaded a not-unwilling young lady at a masked ball to enter the neighbouring cabinet:

Le tête-à-tête dura une heure et se passa en vaines tentatives d'une part, et en complaisances inutiles de l'autre. La demoiselle, aussi vierge après qu'avant le combat, se retira de très mauvaise humeur.

This tiny and effeminate figure — Horace Walpo said he was so small that he must have been cradl in a nutshell like a fairy — was syphilitic into t bargain, and had been brought up by a drunk father who approved of the birch.

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As a result of all this, Matilda 'saw her youthful charms slighted and contemned by her recreant lord, who, in the company of common prostitutes, revealed the secrets of the marriage bed, and spoke of his blooming bride in terms alike indelicate and untrue. Nor did it end here — for it will be seen [in the sequel] that he tainted her wholesome blood with a loathsome disease'.

The blooming bride's annoyances were not confined to those of the marriage bed. There were social grievances as well, for the old court of Denmark was prudish, feudal and dull. 'Few of the courtiers dress like gentlemen', she was supposed to have written to her brother the King of England, 'and their ladies appear in the circle inanimate, like the wax-figures in Westminster-abbey.' Also, there stood in the background the traditional bogy of all bad-fairy stories, a stepmother-in-law.

Christian's father, the tipsy King, had married again after the death of Christian's mother, and had sired a second son by the second wife. 'Juliana Maria, Queen Dowager of Denmark, was, when Matilda arrived in Copenhagen, yet in the prime of life, and the ascendancy of her talents had enabled her to form a strong party amongst the Danish nobles and clergy. This ambitious stepmother artfully masked her own eager desire of reigning, under the plausible pretext of regard to the welfare of her son.' The implication is that the Dowager Queen promoted the tragedy which followed, from the start, in order to reign through her own son, the old King's second one, Prince Ferdinand. However that may be, and it seems unlikely, the Queen from England, s was the sixteen-year-old Queen from England,

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'Inexpressible was the mental torture [of the wicked stepmother] when the pregnancy of the young bride was officially announced. As if to complete her dismay, on January 28th, 1768, the thunder of a thousand pieces of ordinance proclaimed the safe delivery of Queen Matilda of a male child.

'The imbecility of the worn-out monarch, his corrupted morals, and aversion to his wife, were the real sources of that expensive tour which, a few months after the birth of his son, he made through Holland, Great Britain, France and Germany.' The tour was passed in a 'dazzling whirl of dissipation', the actual expense being about two hundred thousand eighteenth-century pounds. He was fêted at the various courts he visited — George III danced 'The Hempdresser' for two hours, according to Mrs. Montagu, at a Court Ball given in his honour and Madame de Vaucluse translated *Hamlet* into French at two days' notice, for his visit to the theatre. He spent his spare time among the adoring populace or strutting in the brothels.

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Struensee was the son of a clergyman. He had been born in 1737. He was considered 'a libertine and a freethinker', but he was a good doctor. He did his best to reason with the king, to discourage the aphrodisiacs, to restrain the excesses and to cure their results. There is no evidence that he was trying to gain control of Christian for interested motives; but, like many good doctors, he did gain control. A protracted battle between himself and Holck ended in the dismissal of the latter, upon their return to Denmark.

Meanwhile, 'the fair, forlorn, neglected Matilda, during the absence of her giddy lord, appeared to feel a truly maternal affection for her child and had the infant and nurse to sleep in her apartment. In proportion as the king's physical and intellectual powers decayed, Matilda had made more than commensurate advances. Her person was much increased in height and breadth; her air and appearance, more womanly, dignified, and imposing; her mind seemed to have acquired firmness; and, on their first interview, her enfeebled husband was almost alarmed at the beautiful and commanding aspect of his Queen: reflecting on his own imbecility, he seemed half reluctant, hal
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Struensee was the son of a clergyman. He had been born in 1737. He was considered 'a libertine and a freethinker', but he was a good doctor. He did his best to reason with the king, to discourage the aphrodisiacs, to restrain the excesses and to cure their results. There is no evidence that he was trying to gain control of Christian for interested motives; but, like many good doctors, he did gain control. A protracted battle between himself and Holck ended in the dismissal of the latter, upon their return to Denmark.

Meanwhile, 'the fair, forlorn, neglected Matilda, during the absence of her giddy lord, appeared to feel a truly maternal affection for her child and had the infant and nurse to sleep in her apartment. In proportion as the king's physical and intellectual powers decayed, Matilda had made more than commensurate advances. Her person was much increased in height and breadth; her air and appearance, more womanly, dignified, and imposing; her mind seemed to have acquired firmness; and, on their first interview, her enfeebled husband was almost alarmed at the beautifu and commanding aspect of his Queen: reflecting o his own imbecility, he seemed half reluctant, ha ashamed to meet her.

'Unfortunate victim of the enemies of an

principled step mother, and a train of vicious courtiers — at that moment his whole system was tainted! Like the snail that crawls over the blushing nectarine, he defiled his youthful bride. The poison, spreading through her veins, soon displayed its destructive influence.'

Struensee was already an expert in treating syphilis, so Christian recommended the doctor to Matilda, as a last gesture before relapsing into imbecility.

This happened in 1769, and the best commentary on what followed may be to state that in 1770 Struensee was created a Councillor and *Maître de requestes*, while in 1771 he had become Prime Minister, a count, and a member of the Order of Matilda. The Queen, like her husband, had fallen under the charm of a successful physician, who had cured her of her malady. Hers had not been a happy married life: she was buxom and nubile; perhaps she threw herself at Struensee's head.

They confined the certifiable monarch to his apartments, and proceeded to behave themselves with the wildest indiscretion. Matilda was nineteen, her doctor thirty-three. He was 'full five feet ten inches high, and very robust; his complexion fair; his eyes blue; his luxuriant hair was flaxen, rather inclined to yellow'. But 'his neck was short, and he was a little in-kneed'. He fenced, danced and rode well. 'He wore his hair dressed like the Queen, namely, two curls on each side, a high toupee, the hair behind plaited, and made fast with a comb.'

'Even at this period,' continues the *Historical Gallery*, several pages later, 'the disposition of Matilda had lost much of that gentleness and good-nature which had distinguished her on her first arrival in

nmark. Her carriage had become more bold and nfident; her temper more quick, severe, and im-erious . . . Notwithstanding the daily exercise she ook, either hunting or riding on horseback, Matilda grew extremely corpulent . . . Matilda had a bosom such as few men could look on without emotion, or women, without envy; and she displayed more of its naked charms than *strict* modesty could approve; and far more than the Danes had witnessed in the preceding queens . . . Matilda was a resolute and fearless horsewoman. It is believed that Struensee first led her to sit across her horse like a man. Perhaps her masculine and indelicate appearance, dressed in *leathern smallclothes*, booted and spurred, riding across a horse, disgraced Matilda in the estimation of the elegant and cultivated of her own sex, more than her undue preference for Struensee . . . That she made a noble figure when mounted on her majestic steed, and dashing through the woods after the chase, her cheeks flushed with ruddy health and violent exercise, may readily be conceded; but when she walked, the charm was dissolved: her abdominal rotundity, and knees that turned, for a male attire, too much inward, spoiled her figure, and gave her an awkward gait. The calves of her legs were of surprising circumference; her ancles large, her foot short and chubby.'

There was an economic reason also, which wa working with those fatal *leathern smallclothes*, with th abdominal rotundity and the calves of surprising ci cumference, toward the downfall of the unhap Queen.

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They had not been helped by the £200,000 spent on the King's tour — a sum which would now be equivalent to two or even to four million. Reform and retrenchment were essential, and Dr. Struensee, the new Prime Minister, was something like a genius. His excellence as a doctor and psychiatrist; the things which they called him, such as 'freethinker' and 'corrupted atheist'; everything now points, not to the conventional conclusion that he was a 'finished sensualist' who had seduced an innocent queen, but to the conclusion that he was a statesman and reformer of a high order. He was a radical premier, and that was why there had to be a Tory revolution.

To eighteenth-century Denmark, his reforms must have been astounding. They included: liberty of the press, diminution of public tables, power to arrest noblemen for debt, disbanding the foot-guards (which was a blow against serfdom), foundation of charity schools, abolition of various sinecure revenues, a stamp act, foundling hospitals, limitation of reversionary offices, a reform of the marriage law, abolition of the death penalty for robbery, 'No distinction to be made in christening natural children from those begotten in wedlock', a reform of the law relating to breach-of-promise-of-marriage, and, perhaps most fatal of all, 'a regulation for the diminution of law-suits in the courts of justice'. It has never been safe to interfere with the revenues of lawyers.

Struensee at the same time dismissed the incompetent officers of the crown, and appointed competent ones. He accomplished this in one year, which does not seem a bad record for a sensualist who had to satisfy an amorous Queen.

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While the storm brewed, says the *Historical Record*, Struensee generally breakfasted in the Queen's apartment . . . The royal palace of Hirscholm was the scene of high-wrought sensuality in every shape. Everything was there to inflame the passions, and afford immediate gratification! Night and day were alike devoted to revelry; it was usually two or three o'clock in the morning ere the Queen retired to her bed, and *eleven* before she appeared in her boudoir. The solitary King was served in his own apartment and was considered of little more importance than his dog.

'The Queen Dowager, Juliana Maria, now began once more to show herself; her hopes again revived! She saw with secret delight, the embers of discontent glowing in every quarter of the kingdom; and if she could not procure the crown for her son Frederick, now in his nineteenth year, she hoped, by the aid of discontented nobles, and the military, during the life of Christian VII, to attain the sole exercise of sovereign power.'

Her intrigue came to a head in 1772, under circum-stances of great peril. Juliana, with the assistance o a nobleman called Rantzau, bullied the witless Kin into signing an instrument for the arrest of Matild Struensee and an underling called Brandt. Th instrument was necessary before any arrest could ta place, yet all depended upon the King keep

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'On the night of the 16th of January, a grand ball and masquerade was given by the court. Queen Matilda, magnificently dressed, and full of spirits, danced with Count Struensee. The ball was closed by Queen Matilda and Prince Frederick; when the former, attended by Struensee, retired to her apartments for the last time! Struensee must have gone to the Queen's room; for *there* his white bear-skin cloak was found a few hours afterwards; and Matilda must have descended by means of the secret staircase to Struensee's apartment, where the guilty pair had their last *tête-à-tête*, and separated never to meet again – at least in this world!'

They had returned to their own beds, and Struensee had read himself to sleep, when the conspirators arrived to make the arrest. The Prime Minister was hurried away at crack of dawn in a hackney coach 'accompanied by officers armed with loaded pistols and drawn swords'. The Queen, surprised *en deshabille* by a posse with lighted tapers and the same drawn swords flashing in the darkness, made a determined effort to reach the King. If she had succeeded, she could probably have reversed the arrest. She was prevented.

'Scarcely half dressed, wrapped up in a large roquelaine, looking with a stern indifference on the surrounding officers, Matilda descended to the gate

where a coach and four, surrounded by a strong body of dragoons, were waiting to escort her to Cronenborg castle.'

The wicked stepmother had won the game.

It was only too easy to break the sensitive Struensee by torture — by thumb-screws, his page said later. Chained to the wall so that he could scarcely sit or stand, in a dungeon, starved, but with the additional mockery of the use of his own silver chamber-pot, the wretched man confessed that he had been the Queen's lover. She had given birth to a second child since the days of the thousand-gun salute — a girl — and this was declared to be the doctor's.

He and his minion Brandt were hustled out of life with all the circumstances of medieval barbarity. At eleven o'clock in the morning of April 28th they were brought to the scaffold. 'Oh! what a luxury is this fresh breeze!' said Struensee, blinking from his cell. He trembled, rattling his chains, perhaps from the cold, perhaps because he was a man broken by torture, while Brandt was executed before his eyes.

'As he sat at the foot of the scaffold waiting his turn to suffer, he saw with unutterable horror streams of blood pour down from the platform above: and so lively were his terrors, that he was unable, without support, to ascend the scaffold. And what a scene awaited him there! Around him lay spread, in horrible disorder, the naked limbs, besmeared with blood, of a man once dearer to him than his own brother! — In the dust there lay his head, the eyes and mouth distended, and the nerves and muscles yet quivering with expiring life. In a small tub were the bowels, heart, lungs, etc. — and the block on which

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Not at all. There was an Englishman called Wraxall, who later became a baronet, and whose interests in life were like those of Horace Walpole or of Lord Glenbervie — gossipy interests. Unfortunately, unlike Walpole or Glenbervie, Wraxall was prepared to interfere in the gossip as well as to record it. He was like a slightly fussy figure out of Anthony Hope, a kind of Rudolf Rassendyl. Certainly, considering the fate of Struensee, he was a brave man.

The Danish nobility, now governed by the wicked stepmother, found that they had jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. A faction arose which desired the restoration of Matilda. Wraxall was approached, with all the paraphernalia of a Ruritanian intrigue: he was to contact the injured Queen: he was to carry letters, each of them as dangerous as a stick of dynamite, between her and George III: he was to endeavour to secure a loan from the English King, in order to replace his sister upon her rightful throne.

Wraxall threw himself into the conspiracy with delightful zeal. He posted up and down the continent in disguise and the depth of winter, tumbling into swollen rivers, sleeping at ale-houses under assumed names, presenting himself at garden doors in black masks with dark lanterns. King George was cautious, promising aid to a *fait accompli* — but not otherwise.

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The exiled Queen was gracious. Wraxall's account of their last meeting has a certain charm.

'I set out before eight, at which hour Mantel engaged to meet me. The weather was most tempestuous, accompanied with rain, and such darkness as rendered it difficult to discern any object. When I got to the drawbridge, no valet appeared; and a few moments afterwards, the guard being relieved, passed close to me. Wrapped in my great-coat, I waited, not without considerable anxiety. At length Mantel arrived. He said not a word, but, covering me all over with his large German cloak, and holding an umbrella over our heads, he led me in silence through the arch, into the area of the castle, from whence he conducted me to the queen's library. There he left me, exhorting me to patience, it being uncertain at what hour her majesty could quit her company. The room was lighted up, and the book cases opened. In about thirty minutes the queen entered the apartment. She was elegantly dressed in crimson satin, and either had, or impressed me as having, an air of majesty, mingled with condescension, altogether unlike an ordinary woman of condition. [They talked for two hours.] When ready to leave me, she opened the door, but retained it a minute in her hand, as if willing to protract her stay. She never perhaps looked more engaging than on that night, in that attitude, and in that dress Her countenance, animated with the prospect of he approaching emancipation from Zell, (which was i fact only a refuge and an exile) and anticipating he restoration to the throne of Denmark, was lighted u with smiles; and she appeared to be in the highe health.'

In perfect health! Within seven weeks, the unlucky Caroline was dead. All level-headed historians have pointed out with the greatest emphasis that she died from natural causes — 'of a contagious fever' caught from one of the domestics. But consider: she was young and vigorous: she was at the head of a dynastic conspiracy: the wicked stepmother-in-law was a person of strong character: and Wraxall seldom held his tongue.

Whatever the truth, she died almost overnight, at the age of twenty-three; and the sister of George III, Queen of Denmark and Norway, was laid in the vault of the town church at Zell, near the coffin of her unfortunate grandmother Sophia Dorothea, the victim of George I.

Poor, bouncing, fat and flaxen Brunswick: she provided by no means the last of the scandals connected with the English royal family. The grand scandal of the Duke of Cumberland's valet was still to come. But at any rate she provided a good one, for her few years, and we may perhaps agree that it is odd to find a great-aunt of Queen Victoria's so closely connected with the headsman's axe, with treasons, stratagems and spoils.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Ears

IF their tears were peculiar, perhaps their ears were even more so.

One of the odd things about the human race is that vices are subject to fashion, like clothes. Between the two German wars of the present century the fashionable vice was probably homosexuality. In Victoria's day it was something more like bankruptcy. In Byron's and Horace Walpole's it was certainly incest: in the Caroline period, perhaps infidelity: in Elizabeth's parricide, matricide or fratricide: in the Middle Ages, apostasy: in the days of Rome, poisoning: and in Greece, perhaps the greatest wickedness may have been pride against the Gods. The other vices existed, but these were the ones which at those times caught the public eye.

In the Age of Scandal the eminent *frisson* was incest. Horace Walpole wrote a book about it: Byron was thought to have committed it and so was Franklin: in *Vatheck* there was a suppressed chapter concerning it: de Sade of course investigated it: the Blue-stockings spoke of it with bated breath: Shelley wrote a play about it, and a sister of the great Lord Chatham was notorious for this peccadillo.

There does, however, seem to have been a small, peculiar and subsidiary devil — connected, astonish-

ingly enough, with what one would have thought to be the least sexual of the human organs: the ear.

'Modesty', observes the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 'is not innate in man, and its conventional nature is easily seen from a consideration of the different ideas held by different races on this subject. With Mahommedan peoples it is sufficient for a woman to cover her face; the Chinese women would think it extremely indecent to show their artificially compressed feet, and it is even improper to mention them to a woman; in Sumatra and Celebes the wild tribes consider the exposure of the knee immodest; in central Asia the finger tips, and in Samoa the navel are similarly regarded.' In just such a manner, the sexual attention of human beings belonging to any country seems to stray, during the course of centuries, from one part of the body to another — as is shown, incidentally, by the varying emphasis laid on differents parts of the body in the cut of our clothes: by bustles, or by false bosoms or by stuffed shoulders.

A student of the Age of Scandal cannot fail to be impressed by the number of aural anecdotes which are to be found in its letters and memoirs: a form of anecdote which, in the present century, seems seldom or never to be related.

'My Lady Carteret is going to Tunbridge', wrote Horace Walpole. 'There is a hurry for a son: his only one is gone mad: about a fortnight ago he was at the Duke of Bedford's, and as much in his few senses as ever. At five o'clock in the morning he waked the Duke and Duchess all bloody and with the lappet of his coat held up full of ears: he had been in the stable and cropped all the horses!' 'There was likewise',

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Ears

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d Creevey, 'a person who told M. he had seen ouché ride full gallop to preside at some celebrated assacre, with a pair of *human ears* stuck one on each de of his hat.' 'Lady Spencer', recorded Fanny Burney, 'brought with her a collection of silver ears, to serve as trumpets, to help deafness . . . During this came Mr. George Caurbridge. The sight of Mrs. Vesey, rising with one of her silver ears on . . . made me unable to keep my countenance. Mrs. Vesey offered him a chair next to Miss E——; but, while she was moving to make way for him, down dropped her ear.' 'At Moyra, in Ireland,' stated the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 'a whole family were murdered, except a servant girl, who escaped by concealing herself under a bed. The murderers were soon after discovered (five in number) in the following manner:—After committing the horrid fact, the villains went off with their booty, leaving a little dog locked up in one of the rooms. From this creature the neighbours cut off the ear, and set him a running; they followed, and he brought them to the house where the villains were sharing the plunder.' The poet Thomson asked a barber whether his razor were sharp, informing him that, if it were not, he 'had as many barber's ears i his parlour at home as any boy had birds' eggs on string'. Mr. Bagenal of Dunleckny, when his neig bour's pigs trespassed upon his flower garden, cut the pigs' ears and sent them over by a servant—up which the two gentlemen fought a duel. A surg called Cheselden said he had invented a new opera for curing Lady Suffolk's deafness: so she mana to get a condemned felon reprieved from death, the ear operation might first be tested on him

turned out, however, that the felon had never been deaf. He was, on the contrary, a cousin of Dr. Cheselden's, and, by this ingenious manœuvre he escaped the gallows. Sir Jonah Barrington revelled in ears, and narrated no less than three long anecdotes about them.

'In the year 1800, a labourer dwelling near the town of Athy, County Kildare, was walking with his comrade up the banks of the Barrow to the farm of a Mr. Richardson, on whose meadows they were employed to mow; each, in the usual Irish way, having his scythe loosely wagging over his shoulder, and lazily lounging close to the bank of the river, they espied a salmon partly hid under the bank. It is the nature of this fish that, when his *head* is concealed, he fancies no one can see his *tail* (there are many wise-acres, besides the salmon, of the same way of thinking). On the present occasion the body of the fish was visible.

'"Oh Ned — Ned dear!" said one of the mowers, "look at that big fellow there: isn't it a pity we ha'nt no spear?"

'"May be," said Ned, "we could be after piking the lad with the scythe-handle."

'"True for you!" said Dennis: "the spike of yeer handle is longer nor mine; give the fellow a dig with it at any rate."

'"Ay, will I," returned the other: "I'll give the lad a prod he'll never forget anyhow."

'The spike and their sport was all they thought of: but the *blade* of the scythe, which hung over Ned's shoulders, never came into the contemplation of either of them. Ned cautiously looked over the bank: the

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unconscious salmon lay snug, little imagining the conspiracy that had been formed against his tail.

'"Now hit the lad smart!" said Dennis: "there now — there! rise your fist: now you have the boy! now Ned — success!"

'Ned struck at the salmon with all his might and main, and that was not trifling. But whether "the boy" was piked or not never appeared: for poor Ned, bending his neck as he struck at the salmon, placed the vertebrae in the most convenient position for unfurnishing his shoulders: and his head came tumbling splash into the Barrow, to the utter astonishment of his comrade, who could not conceive *how* it could *drop off* so suddenly. But the next minute he had the consolation of seeing the head attended by *one of his own ears*, which had been most dexterously sliced off by the same blow which beheaded his comrade.

'The head and ear rolled down the river in company, and were picked up with extreme horror at the mill-dam, near Mr. Richardson's, by one of the miller's men.

'"Who the devil does this head belong to?" exclaimed the miller.

'"Whoever owned it," said the man, "had three ears at any rate."'

'My grandfather had conceived a contempt for, and antipathy to, a sturdy *half-mounted* gentleman, one Mr. Dennis Bodkin, who, having an independent mind, entertained an equal aversion to the arrogance of my grandfather, and took every possible opportunity of irritating and opposing him.

'My grandmother, an O'Brien, was high and proud

— steady and sensible; but disposed to be rather violent at times in her contempts and animosities, and entirely agreed with her husband in his detestation of Mr. Dennis Bodkin.

'On some occasion or other, Mr. Dennis had outdone his usual outdoings, and chagrined the squire and his lady most outrageously. A large company dined at my grandfather's, and my grandmother launched out in her abuse of Dennis, concluding her exordium by an hyperbole of hatred expressed, but not at all meant, in these words — "I wish the fellow's ears were cut off! that might quiet him."

'It passed over as usual: the subject was changed, and all went on comfortably till supper; at which time, when everybody was in full glee, the old butler, Ned Regan (who had drank enough) came in: — joy was in his eye; and whispering something to his mistress which she did not comprehend, he put a large snuff-box into her hand. Fancying it was some whim of her old domestic, she opened the box and shook out its contents: — when, lo! a considerable portion of a pair of bloody ears dropped on the table! — the horror and surprise of the company may be conceived: upon which old Ned exclaimed — "Sure, my lady, you wished that Dennis Bodkin's ears were cut off: so I told old Gahagan (the game-keeper) and he took a few boys with him, and brought back Dennis Bodkin's ears — and there they are; and I hope you are plazed, my lady"!'

'We had been in a café together [in France], and were returning to our hotel about ten o'clock at night, when we saw a small assemblage of people col-

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Bluebeard

ON Whit-tues day [wrote Madame du Deffand to Horace Walpole on April 12th, 1768], he encountered a woman, about thirty years old, who asked him for alms. He questioned her at length, expressed his sympathy, and, to relieve her poverty, offered her the post of caretaker at his pleasure house near Paris. The woman agreed to come and report next day. On her arrival the Marquis showed her every nook and cranny of the house, and finally conducted her to an attic, where he locked the door and commanded her to undress. She threw herself at his feet, and implored him to spare her, as she was a respectable woman. He pulled a pistol from his pocket and ordered her to obey him; which she did forthwith. Then he bound her hands together, and beat her cruelly until the blood flowed. Producing a box of ointment from his coat he rubbed it into the wounds, then went out, leaving her lying on the floor. I do not know whether he gave her food or drink. In any case he did not return until the next day, when he examined her wounds and made certain that the ointment had taken effect. Then he seized a knife and slashed her whole body, smeared the ointment on again, and went away. The poor wretch succeeded in loosening her bonds, and escaped through the window to the street below. It is not known whether she was hurt by the fall. There was a great uproar, and the Lieutenant General was informed. De Sade was arrested, and, they say, taken to Saumur prison. He made out tha

he was testing the healing powers of a certain ointment.

Next day, she added further details:

After the ointment had been applied he unbound the woman, and laid her in a good bed. As soon as she was alone she contrived to escape through the window with the aid of the sheets and the bedspread. The magistrate at Arceuil advised her to lodge a complaint with the Public Prosecutor and the Lieutenant of Police, who had Sade arrested. He gloried in the unheard-of shamelessness of his crime, declaring that it was a noble action, by which he had made known to the world an ointment which would heal all wounds immediately. In this particular case it certainly seems to have worked. The woman withdrew her complaint, apparently on receipt of a sum of money. In the circumstances he will probably escape imprisonment.

Louis-Donatien-François-Aldonze, Marquis and later Comte de Sade, though he never styled himself by the higher title, had been born in 1740, of an ancient and noble line which was descended, ironically enough, from Petrarch's immaculate Laura. He had been educated at the French Eton of the period, had served as a cavalry officer through the Seven Years War, and had been briefly imprisoned for some youthful indiscretion connected with a disgraceful or perhaps with a forbidden [illegible]. His family had decided to settle the young man by marrying him, and they had chosen a daughter of Monsieur de Montreuil, Président de la Cour des Aides, for the patrician alliance. Her name was Renée, and she was twenty years old. But un-

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'I have strictly charged Brissant', the police inspector Marais had reported in 1764, 'to supply him with no more girls for his pleasure house.' Brissant was a brothel keeper.

Well, the female of the ointments was hushed up, as Madame du Deffand predicted. She consented to keep her mouth shut in return for a husband and a pension — no bad return, said contemporary opinion, for a mere whipping. The newly-wedded Marquis retreated to his castle in Provence with the Marquise — and, after some years, with the additional *agrémen* of her younger sister. The latter became his mistress.

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The year 1777 found him still under sentence of death for the cantharides affair, with new troubles about cooks and chambermaids and little girls in the offing, but with great efforts being made to 'arrange' the complications. He went to Paris in pursuit of these negotiations.

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de Retz, and the archetypal 'sadist' had been living up to his future reputation. But now there began to appear an unfortunate, an even ridiculous rift in the lute. It was the music-hall joke. The Marquis de Sade had a mother-in-law.

Madame la Présidente de Montreuil was a persor of strong character and decided opinions. Her elder daughter had been married by a libertine who was decidedly unbalanced: her younger daughter had been debauched by him, a peccadillo which was, in the days of deceased-wife's-sisters, equivalent to incest: but, worst of all, the Marquis was playing ducks-and-drakes with the family *money*. Any amount of incest or knife-slashing would have been preferable to this. The *écus*, the beautiful *livres*, the *rentes* themselves were being dissipated by this exasperating pervert, in hush-money to his various victims, and that no mother-in-law in France could reasonably be expected to suffer. Obviously he would have to be muzzled before it was too late — would have to be locked up, somehow or other, so long as there was no loss of honour, to save the gold. Madame la Présidente set herself down to achieve this object — to rescue, she said, her poor daughter from a situation of imminent danger to life and limb.

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given birth to three children: she was determined, not only not to allow the Marquis to be arrested on any new charge, not only not to deny him his minor pleasures, but also to reverse the condemnation of Marseilles by every means in her power.

From 1777 the Bluebeard sank into the background, eclipsed by the titanic struggle between his wife and his mother-in-law. He was arrested in Paris, transported to Aix, escaped on the way to Vincennes, was re-arrested and consigned to the Bastille. Immured therein, until 1790, he vanished beneath the surface of an incredible correspondence: of *lettres de cachet*, letters to attorneys, money matters, *tracasseries*, intrigues, debts, bribes, manœuvres and trouble with the local curé. The horrible old Présidente rode over all, the reins in her hand, and the addlepated wife, struggling on toward the 'great object' of his liberation, besieged every possible quarter with every possible style of letter.

But what was the Marquis doing meanwhile? Always a timid and inefficient sadist — '*Punit-on les pensées?*' he once demanded in a pet — hamstrung by French aristocratic ideas about the honour of his ancient line and particularly about its revenues, he had, even in his palmiest days, preferred to have an excuse, an explanation, an alibi, even in the darkest of his aberrations. Now, safely locked away in the Bastille where there was nobody to slash, a transformation began to come over him. His first imprisonment had been for writing. His tendency had always been in a way experimental — experiments with ointments or with Spanish flies. Now the scientific attitude took possession of him. He commenced author.

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A German authority, as indefatigable an author as the Marquis himself, and nearly as devoid of humour, has produced a précis of the first great novel, *Justine.* The extract runs to two chapters, of which the following quotation covers only four paragraphs:

The deeds of Jerome filled the monks with emulation. Justine had good luck once more, and escaped this time to an inn in which travellers were murdered. After every crime the innkeeper's wife supplied her husband with one of the women she kept ready for him. Justine had to entice wayfarers into the Inn, and several met their deaths in this way. Then Bressac appeared on the scene once more — he was a relative of the innkeeper — and took them all to see another relation — a Count, who bled his wives to drink their blood.

Yet another relation, M. de Verneuil, arrived with his son and daughter. He was in the habit of rewarding rich women for their love, but taking it without paying from the poor. He was an intellectual Sadist, and staged an orgy on an ottoman over which hung a picture of God; there were other blasphemies. Madame and Mlle. Verneuil were killed.

Justine fled to Lyons, where she met Saint Florin once more. He made a practice of seducing virgins and selling them to slave-dealers. Because she refused to become his assistant, Justine was locked up in a room, and forced to lick his spittle. More orgies.

Next scene: A band of beggars — among them a pederastic Jesuit and a woman given to tribadism, both of whom relate their life-stories. Next: a band of forgers who specialised in hanging women. Their leader, Roland, would allow himself to be hung, and

cut down in the nick of time. He threw Justine into a dungeon filled with corpses.

For thirteen years of imprisonment, through multitudinous seas of similar atrocities, but gamboged by them rather than incarnadined, the dauntless nobleman plodded on. '*Je parricidais*' cried one of his characters, '*j'incestuais, j'assassinais, je prostituais, je sodomais.*' The wild creations of his thoroughgoing Gallic brain violated or submitted to or murdered or were massacred by their fathers, mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins and aunts. They expired singly or in the mass. There was even an apparatus

> which, in one movement, stabbed, hung
> and beheaded sixteen persons.

But the singular thing about all this ridiculous nonsense was that it was unnatural. If there was any fact about real perverts which was indisputable, it was that they were exclusive. Pederasts were uninterested in the opposite sex, masochists were bored by coprophagists, fetichists were out of touch with necrophilists and sadists were quite unmoved by the warmest ardours of the Lesbian urge. The Marquis de Sade, however, was inspired by them all. Scribbling away in his dungeon of the Bastille, where he was allowed a servant and an excellent cuisine, he swept them all into his net: wrote about them with scientific, with classic, with crazy zeal. He must have endured countless hours of dedicated and selfless boredom, in order to make his catalogue complete. He was, in fact, the archetypal Freud.

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Now, what with the confinement and the midnight oil, his eyes were hurting him sadly, his stomach had grown obese, and he was suffering from the occupational diseases of the scholar.

So it would have gone on, presumably, with the intransigent mother-in-law on top, the muddled wife gradually fading into the background and the first psychiatrist scratching away with a succession of quill pens, if it had not been for the wheel of history. But the wheel turned, the French Revolution broke out, *lettres de cachet* were abolished, political prisoners were liberated, and the Marquis de Sade found himself blinking once more in the common light of day.

As a person who had been persecuted by the old regime — nobody remembered why — he became one of the few patricians whose adherence was acceptable to the new order. He was caressed, fêted, adopted by the Reign of Terror, allowed to pronounce an oration on the murder of Marat. Now would have been the time to put his sadism into practice, to be signally revenged upon the family of his mother-in-law — a *ci-devant* aristocrat — or to try out a few of the mass murders in his own books, and the machines for simultaneous executions, even more spectacular than the guillotine.

On the contrary, the miserable bluebeard, finding the Président de Montreuil standing by his carriage hat in hand, instantly forgave past sharpnesses, assisted his relatives, actually presided at the court which acquitted the Montreuils, refused to set his hand to the more bloodthirsty proscriptions, and was very soon back in prison for ten months, as a protector of *émigrés*. The ties of honour, property and timidity had triumphed once again.

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Off went de Sade to prison once again — he had spent nearly half his life there — and thence to a lunatic asylum. Fortunately it was the best kind of mad-house. He was allowed to keep Quesnet with him: there was a theatre in which the lunatics performed, and he was allowed to run it. A fellow prisoner, long afterward, saw him there.

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Not at all. They chopped the gross old body up without a qualm: they buried the remains, just like those of anybody else, in the nearest consecrated soil: his name, far from being forgotten, gave a substantive, adjective and adverb to every civilized language. Nor was this sufficient. An ardent phrenologist dug him up again in the name of Science, examined the skull, and reported gravely that 'the bumps of tenderness and love of children are as prominent as in the head of Héloïse, that model of tenderness and love'. Sainte-Beuve said that he was as great as Byron; Swinburne said that he was greater. Part of one of his novels was reprinted in 1848 as Communist propaganda. Some of his unpublished works are still in the British Museum. They require the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and of two other trustees, before they can be examined by anybody to this very day.

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NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

TASTE IN HIGH LIFE by Hogarth. A satire on the fashions of 1742. On the left a pyramid of playing cards, with a bill inscribed: 'Lady Basto, Dr. to Jn. Pip for cards.' The monkey in a bag wig with a quizzing glass is reading the day's menu. 'Pour Dinner, Cox combs, Ducks Tongues, Rabbits Ears, Fricasey of Snails, Grande d'oeuts [sic] Beurre.' The gentleman with muff who nicely conducts his clouded cane is said to be Lord Portmore, the little black page, Ignatius Sancho. The top left-hand picture shows Monsieur Desnoyer in a ballet, surrounded by 'insects' ('Come, let me flap this bug with gilded wings . . .') and the top right-hand one shows various 'exoticks', including a queue and other wigs, muffs, solitaires, petticoats and French-heeled shoes. The large centre picture shows a classical statue of Venus in stays, high-heeled shoes and hoop petticoat, while in the background a cupid tries to slim a fat lady and in the foreground another cupid burn fashionable garments. The circular pictures are of a lady i a hooped skirt and of a blind man looking towards her. Th fire screen shows a hooped lady squashed into a sedan cha Don't miss the enormous cup and saucer which are bei admired and the prodigious lap-dog on the cushion right foreground.

Westminster School, by Gillray. This is a political car of Fox punishing the Opposition in Parliament (W minster). Pitt, the victim, cries, 'O pardon me & I'll pr you on my honor that I will Honestly & boldly ende to reform . . .' Fox replies: 'That's all Twaddle here's for your India Task! there! there! there! & for your blocking up the old Women's Windows & them drink Tea in the dark! there! there! & here's O I've a a a hundred accounts to settle. there! there there! there! there!' In the background a membe

opposition exclaims: 'Pray forgive us this once and we'll do so no more!!!' Underneath is written:

Dr. Busby settling accounts with Master Billy and his Playmates.

Illustrious bums might merit more regard.
Ah! Bums too tender for a stroke so hard.
Vide Rolliad.

John, Lord Hervey (Sporus) by Vanloo, left.
Horace Walpole by Rosalba, centre.
Sir Robert Walpole by Hysing, right.

Gin Lane by Hogarth. Over the door of the public house called the Gin Royal in left foreground: 'Drunk for a Penny, Dead Drunk for Two Pence, Clean Straw for Nothing.' The ballad being sold by the cadaver in right foreground is marked: 'The Downfall of Mdm. Gin.' The drunken poxed lady takes snuff and drops her baby. A slothful couple gnaw a bare bone with a dog, while a snail crawls to the woman's shoulder. At S. Gripe's pawnshop, a carpenter pledges his tools, a housewife her cooking things. The tipsy old woman in the wheelbarrow is having one for the road. A mother gives her infant a drink: two charity-girls are toasting each other opposite Kilman the Distillers' where the Mob queues for gin: two drunks fight with crutch and stool: a dancing madman with a bellows has transfixed a naked child with a spit: a barber has hanged himself in a garret: a dead woman is being coffined while her baby weeps, opposite the undertaker's: the houses are falling down: rather a nice dog is feeling sorry for the ballad-seller. Written beneath:

Gin, cursed Fiend, with Fury fraught,
Makes human Race a Prey;
It enters by a deadly Draught,
And steals our Life away.

Virtue and Truth, driv'n to Despair,
It's Rage compells to fly,
But cherishes, with hellish care,
Theft, Murder, Perjury.

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Damn'd Cup! that on the Vitals preys,
That liquid Fire contains;
Which Madness to the Heart conveys,
And rolls it thro' the veins.

George Selwyn and his Dog 'Râton' by Reynolds.

Miss Chudleigh in the character of Iphigenia at the Venetian Ambassador's Masquerade. This is not the engraving by J. Cook, mentioned in the text, which showed her with her ravishing smirk.

Admiral Byng by Hudson. He is wearing the great, gold-laced coat which he hurled into the sea off Gibraltar, upon being recalled to England to stand his trial.

Fast Day by Newton. One cleric observes: 'Here's to our old Friend.' To which the other replies: 'You mean the Church I suppose.' Underneath is written:

Fasting and Prayer, attending the Church Bell
That's that's the way, good Christians! to live well!

On March 1st, 1793, the King proclaimed 'a public Fast an
Humiliation' for April 19th for 'God's Blessing and assistan
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Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism by Hogarth. On
chandelier, top left: (upper globe) 'Deserts of New Pu
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says 'To St. Money-trap', is so excited by his own ora
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Under the engraving is written: 'Believe not every Spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false Prophets are gone out into the World. 1 John, Ch. 4, V. 1.'

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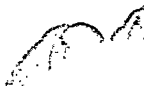
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Dr. Johnson by Northcote.

Carolina Matilda by Cotes. 1766.

Le Marquis de Sade. Biberstein sc. 'De la collection de Mr. H . . . de Paris'. Probably not an actual portrait.